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COHELETH

COHELETH,

COMMONLY CALLED

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES:

Translated from the Original Hebrew,

WITH A

COMMENTARY, HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL.

BY

CHRISTIAN D. GINSBURG.

Βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι,
τότε δι' ὁρώμενοι πρὸς ὁρώμενον. — 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS.

1861.

FIRST PUBLISHED 1861

TO
MY FATHER-IN-LAW,
WILLIAM CROSFIELD, ESQ.,
THIS WORK
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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P R E F A C E.

THE present is another volume of the five Megiloth upon which I undertook to comment. The notes are more extensive than those upon the Song of Songs—1. Because I have endeavoured to trace more fully the connection of Biblical Exegesis in its four great epochs—to shew what influence the Versions of antiquity, belonging to the first epoch, had upon the Mediæval Expositors of the second; how far, again, these ancient Versions and the Jewish Commentators of the Middle Ages of the first two epochs have influenced the Translations of the Reformers in the third epoch; and how much Modern Criticism, forming the fourth epoch, is indebted to the former epochs; and 2. Because, in tracing the historic connection, with the original sources before me, I have found that commentators of high rank have frequently both misquoted and mistranslated the ancients, and especially the Hebrew writers, to such an extent as might hardly have been credited had not the originals accompanied my translations.¹ I trust that the translation of the important Chaldee Paraphrase, the collation of the inestimable but neglected Syriac Version with the original, and the discovery

¹ Compare, for instance, the flagrant errors of Hugh Broughton, p. 118; Dr. Gill, p. 175; Hävernick, Keil, and Stuart, p. 12; Preston, Appendix III.

of the Version from which Coverdale made his translation, given in the Appendices, will be found acceptable contributions to Biblical Literature.

I embrace this opportunity of acknowledging my obligations to my friend, the Rev. W. C. STALLYBRASS, for kind assistance occasionally rendered; and to Mr. DAVID MARPLES, the printer, who has manifested more than a professional interest in this volume, and to whose care and good taste the correctness of the work is largely indebted.

If the Commentary now presented to the public should throw any light upon the acknowledged obscurities of the book, or if the exhibition of the various and conflicting views propounded by the pious and the learned should lower the offensive tone of dogmatisers, I shall esteem it a sufficient reward for the seven years' labour bestowed upon it.

10, RAKE LANE, LIVERPOOL,
July, 1861.

INTRODUCTION.

SECTION I.—TITLE OF THE BOOK, AND ITS SIGNIFICATION.

THIS book is called in Hebrew קְהֵלֶת *Cohleth*, the appellation which its hero gives himself. This term occurs seven times in the book; three times in the beginning (i. 1. 2. 12), three times at the end (xii. 8. 9. 10), and once in the middle (vii. 27) of it. That it is not a proper name, but *an appellative*, is evident from its having the article in xii. 8, and especially from its being construed with a feminine verb in vii. 27. It is generally agreed that *Solomon* is described by this designation, as David *had no other son* who was King of Israel in Jerusalem; *vide* i. 1. 12.

The precise signification of this appellation has, from time immemorial, been a matter of great contention, and the occasion of numerous and most conflicting opinions. According to its form קְהֵלֶת is participle active feminine, Kal, from קָהַל, kindred with קָוַל, Greek καλέω, Latin *calo*, and our English word *call*; it signifies primarily *to call*, then *to call together*, *to assemble*, *to collect*. Like שָׁחַר, קָהַל, נָגַן, פָּיַב, דָּבַר, this participle is the only instance in which *the Kal* is used; but the sense is easily ascertained from the other conjugations. As the Niphal נִקְהַל, *i. e.* the passive of Kal, means *to be called*, *to be collected together* (Exod. xxxii. 1; Levit. viii. 4; Numb. xvi. 3; xvii. 7; Josh. xviii. 1; xxii. 12 *al.*), קְהֵלֶת the Kal part. act. fem. means *congregatrix*, *die Versammelnde*, *die Versammlerin*, *collectress*, *female gatherer*.

Now the difficulty consists in determining three questions,

viz., what did Solomon collect? why does he bear this name here? and how came it to be in *the feminine gender*?

i. As to the first question, namely, *what* did Solomon collect? we submit that a reference to the passages where the verb קָהַל occurs, either in Niphal (Exod. xxxii. 1; Levit. viii. 4; Numb. xvi. 3; xvii. 7; xx. 2; Josh. xviii. 1; xxii. 12; Judg. xx. 1; 2 Sam. xx. 14; 1 Kings viii. 2; 2 Chron. v. 3; xx. 26; Esth. viii. 11, ix. 2. 15. 16. 18; Jerem. xxvi. 9; Ezek. xxxviii. 7); or Hiphil (Exod. xxxv. 1; Levit. viii. 3; Numb. i. 18; viii. 9; x. 7; xvi. 19; xx. 8. 10; Deut. iv. 10; xxxi. 12. 28; 1 Kings viii. 1; xii. 21; 1 Chron. xiii. 5; xv. 3; xxviii. 1; 2 Chron. v. 2; xi. 1; Ezek. xxxviii. 13; Job xi. 10); shews beyond a doubt that it is *invariably* used for collecting or gathering *persons*, especially for religious purposes. So also its derivatives, קָהַל, קְהִלָּה, מִקְהֵלִים, and מִקְהֵלוֹת, *without exception* denote assemblies or gatherings of *people*. The natural signification of קָהַל therefore is, *an assembler of scattered people into the more immediate presence of God; a gatherer of those afar off unto God*; and we retain the literal meaning of *assembler, gatherer*.¹

ii. From this definition of *Cohoeleth*, the second question, viz., *why* Solomon bears this title here? is easily answered. He has it *because it is descriptive of the design of the book*, and *because it connects his labours here with his work recorded in 1 Kings viii.* Solomon, who is there described as *gathering* (יִקְהֵל) the people to hold communion with the Most High in the place which he erected for this purpose, is here again represented as *the gatherer* (קָהַל) of the same people, who, through inexplicable difficulties and perplexities in the moral government of God, loosened their ties, and were in danger of becoming totally detached from that community.

¹ So also Aquila, συναθροιστής; Symmachus παρμιαστής; Midrash Yalkut, Eccles. i. 1; Rambach, Notæ ubiores in Ecclesiasten, contained in the second volume of Michaelis, Notæ ubiores, p. 828; Van der Palm, Ecclesiastes philologica et critica illustratus, Lugd. Batav., 1784, p. 50, &c.; Wangemann, Der Prediger Salomonis, Berlin, 1856, p. 44.

Before we proceed to the examination of the third question, we shall review the different modes in which these two questions have been propounded.

1. One of the traditional opinions given in the Midrash Rabba is that קָהַל means *preacher*, and that Solomon obtained this name *because his discourses were delivered before* (קָהַל) *the congregation*.¹ But—1. The verb קָהַל does not at all include the idea of *preaching*; 2. The explanation *preacher* ascribes an office to Solomon which is nowhere mentioned in the Scriptures. The appeal to xii. 9, where we are told that Coheleth “*taught the people wisdom*,” no more proves Solomon to have been a preacher, than a reference to Deut. iv. 5, where we are told that Moses *taught the people* the divine institutions, or to Deut. xi. 19, where the Israelites are commanded *to teach their children*, would prove that they were preachers. The phrase לְמַדְרֵעַת simply means *to impart knowledge, to inform*, irrespective of the way in which it is done (comp. Is. xl. 14); and the passage in xii. 9 would never have been forced into that far-fetched sense, if it had not been for want of proof that *Cohoeleth* means *preacher*. 3. The title *preacher* is too modern, and quite inconsistent with the book itself; since iv. 17, and almost all the succeeding appeals, which are in the *singular number*, “*Keep thy foot when thou goest*,” &c., shew that these discourses were *not delivered before an assembly of people*, as the Midrash and others will have it. 4. This explanation entirely destroys the connection between the design of the book and the import of the symbolic name *Cohoeleth*, which, according to our interpretation, is very obvious.

2. We are told that *Cohoeleth* means *gatherer* or *acquirer of wisdom*, and Solomon is called by this name *because he gathered or acquired much wisdom*, just as he is called elsewhere

¹ Midrash Rabba, קָהַל דְּבָרֵי נִסְחָיו בְּקָהַל, Eccles. i. 1; hence the Sept. ἐκκλησιαστής; the Vulg. *ecclesiastes*; and St. Jerome's explanation, ἐκκλησιαστής Græco *sermone appellatur qui coetum*, i. e., *ecclesiam congregat.*, Comment. in loco; Luther, Coverdale, the Geneva Version, the Authorised Version, and many modern commentators.

"gatherer son of Jakeh" (Prov. xxx. 1), *because he gathered or acquired all the wisdom, and gave it out again.*¹ As offshoots of this must be regarded the two following interpretations:—

3. *Collector, compiler*, and that Solomon is so called *because he collected together in this book diversified experience and various views and maxims for the good of mankind.*²

4. *Eclectic*, ἐκλεκτικός, a name given to Solomon by his father or teacher, *because of his skill in selecting and purifying, from the systems of different philosophers, the accumulation of sentiments contained in this book*; just as the great philosopher, whose original name was Aristocles, was by his teacher called Plato, in consequence of the fluency of his speech or the comeliness of his person.³

5. *Cohemoth* means *accumulated wisdom*, and this appellation was given to Solomon *because wisdom was accumulated in him.*⁴ But all these interpretations are alike contrary to the signification of קָהַל, which never means *to gather THINGS*, or *to compile*, but invariably denotes *to gather PEOPLE, to convene an assembly*. The view mentioned in No. 3 incurs the additional censure of regarding this book as a *compilation* of different sayings and maxims, whereas it is a regular treatise upon a definite subject, and each part of it gradually develops the design of the author; and the view given in No. 5 is contrary to the grammatical form of קָהַל which is *the active participle*, and can therefore not be taken in a *passive* sense.

6. It means *the reunited, the gathered soul*, and it describes *Solomon's re-admission into the Church, in consequence of his*

¹ Rashi על שקייל חכמות הרבה וכן במקום אחר קוראו אגור בן יקה שאמר כל החכמה הזקיהה ; and also Rashbam *in loco*.

² Grotius, Annot. ad Ecclesiast. i. 1; Mayer, A Commentary upon the holy writings of Job, David, and Solomon, p. 771; Mendelssohn, Commentary on Ecclesiastes, translated by Theod. Preston, London, 1845, p. 130; Friedländer, Der Prediger, Berlin, 1788, p. 91; Heinemann, Uebersetzung des Koheleth, Berlin, 1831, p. 3.

³ Rosenthal, Koheleth, übersetzt nebst einem ebräischen Commentar, Prag., 1858, p. 17.

⁴ Ibn Ezra, נשמה כן על לשון החכמה שנקראה בו.

repentance; and the first verse we are told ought to be translated, "The words of the soul, or person congregated or gathered unto the church or congregation of saints, viz. of the son of David, King in Jerusalem."¹ This explanation owes its origin to the last-mentioned view, and is guilty of the same violation of grammar, viz., assigning to the *active* participle קָהַל *a passive* sense.

7. It means *the penitent*,² and describes the contrite state of Solomon's heart for his apostacy. But, apart from the fact that even the Arabic word קהל, which is appealed to for this meaning of the Hebrew קָהַל, cannot be made to bear this sense; recourse to a cognate language, in order to assign an anomalous signification to a frequently occurring and well defined expression, must always be deprecated. Besides, this interpretation is utterly at variance with the book itself, since there is not a single passage in it which, according to its plain sense, can be construed into a *confession of sin*, or taken as the language of a *repenting and contrite heart*, denouncing sin as a *heinous crime*.

8. It signifies *concessus, an assembly, an academy*; and the first verse is either to be translated, "The sayings of the academy of the son of David," חֲכָמִים קָהַל *wise men* being supplied after קָהַל,³ or "The sayings of a member of the academy," &c., בְּעַל being supplied before קָהַל.⁴ To say nothing of its intolerant harshness, chap. i. 12 shews the utter inconsistency

¹ Cartwright, Metaphrasis et Homiliæ in Librum Salomonis qui scribitur Ecclesiastes, Amstelodami, 1647, fol. 1; Bishop Reynolds, Annotations on the Book of Ecclesiastes, vol. iv. of his works, London, 1820, p. 38; Granger, Exposition on Ecclesiastes, London, 1621.

² Coecejus, Comm. in i. 1, and Heb. Lex. *in voc.*; Schultens, Diss. de Utilitate dialectorum Orient. ad tuendam integritatem cod. Heb., c. 2, § 24; Schröder, Instit. Ling. Hebr., p. 236, quoted by Van der Palm, p. 48; Holden, p. xxxiv.; Knorr, p. 5.

³ Döderlein, Scholia in Libros Vet. Test. Poet., p. 170, &c.; and his Salomo's Prediger und Hohes Lied, Jena, 1784, p. xv., &c.; Nachtigal, Koheleth oder die Versammlung der Weisen, Halle, 1798, p. 20, &c.

⁴ Gaab, Beiträge zur Erklärung des sogenannten Hohenlieds, Koheleth, &c.; Tübingen, 1795, p. 48.

of this interpretation, for, according to it, Solomon addresses his literary society, "I, O academy! was King in Jerusalem," thus making Solomon inform the members of the society over which he was president *who* and *what* he was, as if they did not know it.

9. It means *an old man*, and Solomon indicates by the name Coheleth his weakness of mind, when, yielding to his wives, he worshipped idols.¹ Here, again, recourse is had to the Arabic to obtain this sense, which must be repudiated, for the reason given in No. 7. Besides the Hebrew has several terms for *old man* (שֵׁנָה, זָקֵן), and if the sacred writer had intended to convey this idea, he would assuredly have chosen one of them, and not have felt obliged to assign a foreign signification to a well-known Hebrew word.

10. It means *exclaiming voice*, and the words of the inscription ought to be rendered, "The words of the voice of one exclaiming," being analogous to the title assumed by John the Baptist (John i. 23).² But as this far-fetched explanation is also obtained by appealing to a cognate language, we must reject it, for the reason already given.

11. It means *Sophist*, according to the primitive signification of the word, which implied a combination of philosophy and rhetoric, קְהֵלֶת being the same as σοφιστής in Greek, with this difference, that the Hebrew sage was so denominated, from his being the occasion of a great concourse of people who came to hear him, whilst the Greek speaker obtained his name from the wisdom he professed to teach.³

12. It means *philosopher, or moralist*.⁴

¹ Simonis Lex. Heb. in voc.; Schmidt, Salomo's Prediger, oder Koheleth Lehren, Giessen, 1794, p. 80, &c.

² Lud. de Dieu, as quoted by Desvieux, p. 477, and Holden, p. xxxi.

³ Desvieux, A Philosophical and Critical Essay on Ecclesiastes, London, 1760, p. 479, &c.

⁴ Spohn, Der Prediger Salomo, Leipzig, 1785, p. 8; Gaab, Beiträge, &c., p. 48; Auerbach, Das Buch Koheleth neu übersetzt mit einem Hebräischen Commentar, Breslau, 1837, p. 28, &c.

13. It means *the departed spirit* of Solomon, which is introduced as speaking throughout this book in the form of a shadow.¹

These interpretations are so far-fetched, and so unnatural, that they require no refutation, and the enumeration of them will tend to shew the soundness of the explanation we defend.

iii. With regard to the third question, viz., *How* came this title to be in the feminine gender? we reply, Because *Solomon personifies Wisdom*, who appears herself, in Prov. i. 10, and viii. 1, &c., as Coheleth, or *the gatherer* of the people.² Such a personification of wisdom also occurs in the New Testament, as will be seen from a comparison of Luke xi. 49, 50, with Matt. xxiii. 34, and is in perfect harmony with the notions which were current about Solomon, who is regarded as wisdom incarnate, and is represented as teaching in this capacity (Book of Wisdom, vii. 7—ix.). Moreover, this explanation is both substantiated by and explanatory of the otherwise inexplicable construction of *Coheleth* with a *feminine* verb (אָמְרָה קְהֵלֶת) in vii. 27, which already Rashi (אמרה קבוצת החכמה) and Ibn Ezra (ומלת אמרה) (ומלת אמרה על לשון החכמה), though giving a different interpretation of Coheleth, were obliged to admit that *it is owing to wisdom being spoken of*. The assertion, therefore, that this incarnation of wisdom is not indicated by the sacred writer, utterly ignores this passage. The objection that such expressions as, *I gave my heart to know wisdom*; *I acquired wisdom* (i. 16. 17; ii. 12); *wisdom stood by me* (ii. 9); *wisdom was far from me* (vii. 23), &c.,

¹ Augusti, Einleitung in das Alte Testament, p. 240, &c.

² So also St. Augustine, *Sapientia semel per Salomonem cecinit*, quoted by Knobel, p. 6, and by Hengstenberg in Kitto, Cyclop. Bib. Lit., art. Ecclesiastes, vol. i., p. 594; Geier, in Salomonis Regis Israel Ecclesiasten Comment. ed. quartus, Lipsiæ, 1711, p. 10; Le Clerc, Comment. Concio. Salom. i. 1; Rambach, Notæ uberioræ in Ecclesiasten Salomonis, contained in vol. ii. of Michaelis, Notæ uberioræ, p. 835; Carpzov. Int. ad Lib., p. 201; Holden, p. xlv; Ewald, Krit. Gramm., p. 569; and his Sprüche Salomo's und Koheleth, Göttingen, 1837, p. 189; Köster, Das Buch Hiob und der Prediger Salomo's, Schleswig, 1831, p. 102; Hitzig, Die Sprüche und der Prediger Salomo's, Leipzig, 1847, p. 125; Wangemann, Der Prediger Salomonis, Berlin, 1856, p. 43; Hengstenberg, Der Prediger Salomo, Berlin, 1860, p. 39, &c.

are incompatible with it,' arises from a confusion of wisdom animating a person with a personified idea; the wisdom which is concrete in Solomon with absolute wisdom. It must be borne in mind that Solomon, though animated by and representing wisdom, does not lose his individuality; and hence he speaks sometimes of his own experience, and sometimes utters the words of wisdom, whose organ he is, just as the Apostles are sometimes the organs of the Holy Ghost. Comp. Acts xv. 28.

This question, too, viz., How came this title to be in the feminine gender? has been variously answered.

1. It is in the feminine gender, because קְהֵלֶת, *Cohleth*, refers to נַפֵּשׁ, *the intellectual soul* understood.¹ But this explanation, though virtually the same as that which we have given, is very indistinct, in consequence of the views of its propounders respecting the *signification* of *Cohleth*.

2. It is in the feminine form, *to shew the great excellency of the preacher, or his charming style*, which this gender indicates.²

3. It is in the feminine, *because a preacher travails, as it were, like a mother, in the spiritual birth of his children*, just as the Apostle Paul says, "My little children, of whom I travail again in birth till Christ be formed in you" (Gal. iv. 19), *and has tender and motherly affection for his people*.³

4. It is in the feminine, *to describe the infirmity of Solomon, who appears here as worn out by old age*.⁴

5. The feminine is used in a *neuter sense*, because the departed spirits have no specific gender (comp. Matt. xxii. 30),⁵ in accord-

¹ Knobel, p. 7.

² Rashi, ואמר קבוצת החכמה : ואמר קבוצת החכמה : ואמר קבוצת החכמה : ואמר קבוצת החכמה, on xii. 8, and vii. 27; Rashbam, on vii. 27; Ben Melech, on vii. 27, which has been followed by many Christian commentators.

³ Lorinus, Comment. in Ecclesiasten, Moguntiae, 1607, p. 12; Zirkel, Untersuchung über den Prediger mit Philologischen und Kritischen Bemerkungen, Würzburg, 1792.

⁴ Pineda, Comment. in Ecclesiasten, Antw., 1620, *in loco*; Mayer, Comment., p. 771.

⁵ Mercer, Comment. *in loc.*; Simonis, Lex. Heb. *in voc.*

⁶ Augusti, p. 242, &c.

ance with the explanation given in ii. 13. These views require no refutation.

6. The termination ת, is not at all feminine, but, as in Arabic, is used as an *auxesis* to the force of the word, so that קְהֵלֶת means a *pre-eminent preacher*.¹ But, apart from the fact that such a usage of the feminine termination has no parallel in Hebrew, and that recourse to a foreign language is to be deprecated, this *αὐξήσις* means *much*; accordingly, קְהֵלֶת would signify *much preaching*, and not *pre-eminent preacher*.

7. The feminine gender is to be explained, from the custom in Hebrew and other languages of designating by *feminine* and *abstract* names persons holding certain *ranks* and *offices*.² Against this explanation we urge — 1. That *Cohleth* is neither a name of *rank* nor of *office*, but simply *describes the act of gathering the people together*; 2. That the construction of the feminine verb with it in vii. 27, is utterly irreconcilable with this view; 3. That abstracts, though sometimes expressed by feminine forms, are never formed from the *active participle*; and 4. That there is not a single instance to be found where a *concrete* is *first made an abstract, then again taken in a personal sense*.

SECTION II. — CANONICITY OF THE BOOK.

In inquiring into the canonicity of any book of the Old Testament, it must always be borne in mind that no inspired writer gives a catalogue of the books regarded as canonical up to his time, and that even the earliest uninspired notice taken of the entire canon is a simple reference to its threefold division, viz., *the Law, the Prophets, and the other writings*, i. e., *Hagiography*.³ The reason of this categorical designation is obvious.

¹ Jahn, Einleitung in das Alte Testament, p. 828, &c.

² Desvieux, p. 477; Gesenius, Lehrgeb., p. 468, and 878; Knobel, p. 8, &c.; Herzfeld, *Cohleth* übersetzt und erläutert, Braunschweig, 1838, p. 25; Stuart, A Commentary on Ecclesiastes, New York, 1851, p. 107; Plumptre, in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, art. Ecclesiastes.

³ Comp. the Prologue to Jesus son of Sirach, ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πατρια βιβλία, and farther on, ὁ νόμος καὶ αἱ προφητίαι καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν βιβλίων. And see also Luke xxiv. 44.

The sacred books were too well known to every Israelite to require a more specific account of them. It was only when the superiority of the inspired books had to be defended before a *heathen, who was ignorant of their number and import*, that Josephus felt himself obliged to *enumerate and describe them* more particularly. "We have not," he submits, "a countless number of books opposing and contradicting each other, but only *two-and-twenty*, containing the records of every age, which are justly believed to be Divine, and of these *five* belong to Moses, *thirteen* to the Prophets, and the remaining *four* contain hymns to God and maxims of life for men."¹ But even this vindication being necessarily confined to *the certainty of the number, the publicity, and veracity* of the Hebrew records, as contrasted with *the countless number of the concealed writings* of the Hellenists, rendered it superfluous to give the names of books which were well known to every Jew, and which would have been utterly useless to Apion, the heathen. It is, however, generally admitted that these twenty-two books are: 1—5, the Books of Moses; 6, Joshua; 7, Judges and Ruth, which belongs to that period; 8, first and second Samuel; 9, first and second Kings; 10, first and second Chronicles; 11, Ezra and Nehemiah, because Ezra appears in Nehemiah, and because both were ascribed to one author (comp. Baba Bathra, 15, a; Sanedrin, 93, b); 12, Esther; 13, Isaiah; 14, Jeremiah and Lamentations, by the same author; 15, Ezekiel; 16, Daniel; 17, the Minor Prophets, put together because of their smallness, and also to obtain the number 22; 18, Job; 19, the Psalms; 20, the Proverbs; 21, Ecclesiastes; 22, the Song of Songs.

¹ Comp. Joseph. cont. Apion. i. 8, with Eusebius, Hist. Eccles. iii. 10. Josephus' division of the Scriptures into twenty two books is owing to an ancient custom to obtain the number of the Hebrew alphabet, or some other significant or sacred number, when divisions were made. The division into *four-and-twenty* books, עשרים וארבע, which is adopted by the Massorites, and is become a technical name among the Jews for the Old Testament, is from the Greek-speaking Jews, who made it according to the Greek alphabet, containing *twenty-four letters*. For the same reason, the Iliad and the Odyssey are respectively divided into *twenty-four books*.

The correctness of this admission is evident, from the catalogue of the inspired writings given in the Talmud. Here, again, we must remark that this formal account of the books is not given to *shew which are canonical*, as this would have been superfluous in the eyes of the Talmudists and of the Jews, since every Israelite *well knew from of old* the canonical books; but is incidentally brought forward to point out the order in which they are to follow each other—a circumstance which greatly increases its importance and value. Three subjects are discussed in Baba Bathra, pp. 13 and 14, viz., 1. The agglutination or joining together of the canonical scrolls or books; 2. The order in which they are to follow each other; and 3. Their respective authors or compilers. The first discussion, viz., about the agglutination of the scrolls, throws no direct light upon the point under consideration. The gross misunderstanding, however, of the passage in the Talmud which contains it will be seen in the foot-note.¹ The third discussion will be

¹ The passage is, חז"ל מדיק אדם חורח נביא' כחובים כא' דבר ר' מאיר ר' יהודה אומר, חורח בפני עצמה נביא' בפני עצמן וחכמי' בפני עצמן וחכמים אומרים כל אחד ואחד בפני עצמו ואמר רבי יהודה מעשה בביחוס בן זונין שהיו לו שמונה נביאים מדובקין כאחד על פי ר"א בן עזריה ויש אומרים לא היו אלא א' א' בפני עצמו אמר ר' מנשה' והביאו לפנינו חזרה נביאים וחכמים מדובקים כאחד : והכשרנים : Our Rabbins teach that one may join the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Hagiography together in one, so said R. Mayer; R. Jehudah said the Pentateuch by itself, the Prophets by themselves, and the Hagiography by themselves; and the Sages said, each book by itself. Then R. Jehudah said it happened that Bayithos, the natural son, had the eight Prophets joined together in one, according to the advice of R. Eliezer ben Azariah; but others said that it was not so, but that each one was by itself. Then Rab said, it happened that the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiography were brought before us joined together in one, and we pronounced them lawful. And this decided the question. The whole discussion is so plain that it requires no comment, and we are amazed that Hävernick (Allgemeine Einleitung in das Alte Test. erster Theil, erste Abth. 1854, p. 40) should have taken it to treat upon the *division* of the canon, and then have disconnected and so wofully mistranslated the words, אחד ואחד, בפני עצמו, die Weisen sagen: alles ist eines und jeder Theil bestehet wieder für sich, b. 6. bildet wieder ein für sich abgeschlossenes Ganze: The wise men say, the whole is one, and each part forms one again for itself, i. e., forms again for itself a complete whole: and that he should also have disconnected the decision of the discussion, omitted the last and most important word, and translated חז"ל, רביא, und sie haben und hinterlassen die Thorah, Propheten und Hagiographen verbunden zu einem Ganzen, and they (i. e., the

examined in the section appropriated to the authorship of this book. It is the second, viz., the discussion about the order of the sacred books, which is of the utmost importance to the identity of Josephus' canon, inasmuch as in it all the inspired books are mentioned *by name*. Here, then, we have it beyond the shadow of a doubt that the books which, according to Josephus (*l. c.*), formed the sacred canon long before his time; which no Jew, as he tells us, dared to alter in any way; upon which all the Jews are taught from their very infancy to look as the decrees of God; and for which every Jew, if necessary, would gladly die, are, according to the order of this discussion, *the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the Minor Prophets; Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Coheleth, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, and Chronicles.*¹ The Old Testament canon,

same wise men) have bequeathed to us the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiography, united in one whole, connecting it with the preceding quotation. Keil, who almost rewrote this part of Hävernicks work, has espoused this extraordinary blunder; so also Professor Stuart, who gravely tells us (*Critical History and Defence of the Old Testament Canon*, Davidson's ed., London, 1849, p. 233, &c.), "In the Gemara Tract, Babba Bathra, fol. 13, c. 2, we find the following declaration: Our wise men say that the whole is one, and each part is one by itself; and they have transmitted to us the Law, the Prophets, and the Kethubim, united together in one." The works of Hävernicks, Keil, and Stuart occupy too high a position, both here and on the Continent, to leave so flagrant an error unnoticed.

1 חנו רבנן סדרן של נביאים יהושע ושופטים שמאל וכלבים ירמיה ויחזקאל ישעיה ושנים עשר מכרי יהושע קדים דכתיב חזקת דבר ה' בהושע וכי עם הושע דבר חזקת והלא משה ועד הושע כמה נביאים היו אמר רבי יוחנן שהיה חזקת לארבעה נביאים שנחנבאו באוחו הפרק ואלו הן הושע וישעיה עמוס ומיכה וליקדמיה להושע ברשא כיון דכתיב נבואתיה גבי חגי וזריה ומלאכי סוף נביאים הוה חשיב ליה בהדרו ולכתביה לחזקיה וליקדמיה אידי דושר מירכס מכרי ישעיה קדים מירמיה ויחזקאל ליקדמיה לישעיה ברש' כיון דמלכים סופיה חורבנא וירמיה כוליה חורבנא ויחזקאל וישעיה חורבנא וסופיה נחמא וישעיה כוליה נחמא סמיכין חורבנא לחורבנא ונחמא לנחמא *The Rabbins teach that the order of the Prophets is—Joshua and Judges, Samuel and Kings, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Isaiah and the Minor Prophets, of which Hosea is the first, as it is written, "The Lord spake to Hosea first."* (Hos. i.) *But has Hosea really spoken first? and were there not many prophets between Moses and Hosea? R. Jochanan replied, because he was the first of the four prophets who prophesied at that time, viz., Hosea, Isaiah, Amos, and Micah. Then Isaiah ought to be put at the head of these? Since his prophecy was written upon Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the last of the prophets, it was considered as separate, and written down separately, and was put at the head because it is little and might easily be*

therefore, which we now possess, is the canon which the Jews had long before the time of Christ, and *Cohleth* composed one of the sacred books which our Lord called *τὰς γραφὰς*, the *Scriptures* (Matt. xxii. 29). Hence the Septuagint version, which was made before the Christian era, the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, which belong to the first two centuries of Christianity, and the Catalogue of Melito, bishop of Sardis (fl. 170 A.D.), which he brought from Palestine — all these include *Cohleth*.

As reference is frequently made to the discussions in the Talmud, &c., where it is affirmed objections have been made at a very early period against the canonicity of *Cohleth*, we believe that the real force of these passages will best be seen by giving them entire. Upon the declaration in the Mishna, that all the books in the Bible *pollute the hands*, (i. e., *are inspired*, or *canonical*, see my Commentary on the Song of Songs, p. 3,) including the Song of Songs and *Cohleth*,¹ *R. Jehudah said the Song of Songs does pollute the hands, but about Cohleth there is a difference of opinion: R. Josi said Cohleth does not pollute the hands, and the difference of opinion is about the Song of Songs. R. Simeon said Cohleth is one of those points upon which the decision of Beth-Shammai is more lenient and Beth-Hillel more rigid. Then R. Shimeon Ben-Azzai said, I have*

lost. Since Isaiah was before Jeremiah and Ezekiel, ought not Isaiah to be at the head? As the book of Kings ends with tribulation, and Jeremiah is all tribulation, and Ezekiel begins with tribulation and ends in consolation, whereas Isaiah is all consolation, tribulation is joined to tribulation (i. e., Jeremiah to the end of Kings), and consolation to consolation (i. e., Isaiah to the end of Ezekiel.)

The order of the Hagiography is Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Cohleth, the Song of Songs, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, and Chronicles. To him who says that as Job lived in the days of Moses, the book of Job ought to be put first, as the beginning, we reply, we must not begin with punishment. Ruth, too, contains chastisements? But such chastisements as have a happy issue.

1 כל כתבי הקדש מסמאין את הידים שיר השירים וקהל מסמאין את הידים ר' יהודה אומר שיר השירים מסמא את הידים וקהל מחלוקת ר' יוסי אומר קהל אינה מסמא את הידים ושיר השירים מחלוקת רש"א קהל מקולי ב"ש ומחומר ב"ה אכר ר"ש בן עזאי מקבל אני מפי שנעים ושנים וקנים ביום שהושיבו את ר' אליעזר בן עזריה בשיבה ששיר השירים וקהל מסמאין את הידים (ידין ס"ג ה')

received it from the mouth of the seventy-two elders, at the time when R. Eliezer Ben-Azzai was appointed elder, that the Song of Songs and Coheleth pollute the hands.—Yadayim, v. 3.

In the Talmud, where the same discussion is given, we are told:¹ R. Mayer said Coheleth does not pollute the hands, but there is a difference of opinion about the Song of Songs; R. Josi said the Song of Songs does pollute the hands, and the difference of opinion is about Coheleth; whereas R. Simeon said Coheleth is one of those points upon which the decision of Beth-Shammai is more lenient and Beth-Hillel more rigid; but Ruth, the Song of Songs, and Esther pollute the hands; this is according to what R. Joshua had said. R. Simeon ben Menasia submitted that Coheleth does not pollute the hands, because it contains Solomon's own wisdom. Whereupon they said unto him, and has he (Solomon) only indited this (Coheleth), and has it not long been said that he also spoke three thousand proverbs (1 Kings v. 12), and said, too, Do not add to his words? (Prov. xxx. 6). What means this (ואומר) "and he said"? If thou (R. Simeon) wilt say he (Solomon) said it appropriately, having written down what he wished and kept back what he wished, then come and hear, Do not add to His words (i.e., to God's words).—Megila, 7, a.

In another tract of the Talmud it is recorded:² R. Jehuda, son of R. Samuel, son of Shilath, said in the name of Rab, the sages wanted to declare Coheleth apocryphal, because its statements contradict each other. And why have they not declared it apocryphal? Because it begins with words of the Law and ends with the words of the Law: it begins with the words of the Law,

¹ ר' מאיר אומר קהלא אינו משמא את הידים ומחלוקת בשיר השירים ר' יוסי אומר שיר השירים משמא את הידים ומחלוקת בקהלא ר' שמעון אומר קהלא מקולי ב"ש ומחזמיר ב"ה אבל רות ושיר השירים ואסתר משמאין את הידים הוא דאמר כר' יהושע חניא ר' שמעון בן מנסיא אומר קהלא אינו משמא את הידים משני שחכמתו של שלמה היא אמרו לו וכי זו בלבד אמר הלא כבר נאמר וידבר שלשת אלפים משל ואומר אל חוסף על דבריו מאי ואומר וכי תימא כימר פוטא אמר דאינעי איכתיב דאינעי לא איכתיב תא שמע אל חוסף על דבריו ויגלה ו' ע"א

² אמר רב יהודה בריה דר' שילח משמיה רבב בקשו חכמים לגנוי ספר קהלא משני שדבריו סותרין זה את זה וכפני כה לא גנוהו משני שתחילתו דברי תורה וסופו דברי תורה החילתו דברי תורה וכתוב מה יחרון לאדם בכל עמלו שיעמול תחת השמש ואמר רבי ר' ינאי תחת השמש הוא דאין לו קדם השמש יש לו סופו דברי תורה וכתוב סוף דבר הכל נשמע את האלהים ירא ואח מצותיו שמור כי זה כל הימים ושבת ל' ב'

for it opens with the words, "What advantage has man in all his labour wherewith he labours under the sun?" (i. 3) and it is said in the school of R. Jannai that "under the sun" means that which is unprofitable for him; just as "above the sun" denotes that which is profitable for him: it ends with the words of the Law, for it concludes with the words, "In conclusion, all is heard; fear the Lord, and keep his commandments," &c. (xii. 13.)—Shabbath, 30, b.

In the Midrash we read,¹ "the sages wanted to declare Coheleth apocryphal, because they found sentiments in it tending to infidelity."—Vayikra Rabba, 161, b.

Thus also St. Jerome tells us:² the Hebrews say that, among other writings of Solomon which are obsolete and forgotten, this book ought to be obliterated, because it asserts that all the creatures of God are vain, and regards the whole as nothing, and prefers eating and drinking and transient pleasures before all things. From this one paragraph it deserves the dignity that it should be placed among the number of the divine volumes, in which it condenses the whole of its discussion, summing up the whole enumeration, as it were, and says that the end of its discourse is very easily heard, having nothing difficult in it, namely, that we should fear God and keep his commandments (xii. 13, 14).

But we submit that these discussions, so far from impairing, confirm the canonicity of Coheleth, since they shew beyond a doubt—1. That these objections, which were by no means confined to the book in question, were urged by the school of Shammai, which exercised a supercilious rigour in the interpre-

¹ בקשו חכמים לגנוי ספר קהלא משני שמצאו בו דברים מפס' לצד מינות וויקרא רבה. קסא. ע"ב

² Aiunt Hebræi, cum inter cetera scripta Salomonis, quæ antiquata sunt, nec in memoria duraverunt, et hic liber oblitterandus videretur, eo quod vanas assereret Dei creaturas et totum putaret esse pro nihilo et cibum et potum et delicias transeuntes præferret omnibus: ea hoc uno capitulo meruisse auctoritatem, ut in divinorum voluminum numero poneretur, quod totam disputationem suam et omnem catalogum hac quasi ἀνασφαλισμένη coarctaverit et dixerit finem sermonum suorum auditu esse promptissimum, nec aliquid in se habere difficile, ut scilicet Deum timeamus et ejus præcepta faciamus.—Hieron. Comment. xii. 13.

tation of Scripture;¹ 2. That they were overruled by the positive declaration from the seventy-two elders, which is to us of the utmost importance, being a testimony anterior to the Christian era, that Coheleth is canonical; 3. That the objections against it were based upon apparent contradictions and difficulties; and 4. That these difficulties had been so satisfactorily explained by the Rabbins themselves, that when the apparent contradictions of the book of Proverbs were urged against its canonicity, the satisfactory solution of Coheleth was adduced as an instance to caution against accepting contradictions too rashly.²

Coheleth is the fourth of the (חמש מגילות) *five Megiloth*, or books, which are read annually in the synagogue at five appointed seasons. The reason for its occupying the *fourth* position in the present arrangement of the Hebrew canon is, that the feast of Tabernacles, on which it is read, is the *fourth* of these occasions.

SECTION III. — DESIGN AND METHOD OF THE BOOK.

The design of this book, as has already been intimated (*vide supra*, p. 2), is to gather together the desponding people of God from the various expediencies to which they have resorted, in consequence of the inexplicable difficulties and perplexities in the moral government of God, into the community of the Lord, by shewing them the utter insufficiency of all human efforts to obtain real happiness, which cannot be secured by wisdom, pleasure, industry,

¹ Comp. Graetz, Geschichte der Juden iv., p. 40, &c.; Jost, Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Secten, i., p. 61, &c.

² The passage alluded to is as follows: ואין ספק משלי בקשו לגנוב דבריו סותרין זה את זה ומפני מה לא נגזרוהו אמרי ספר קהלת לא עיינין ואשכחין סתמא דכא נמי ליינין; and also the book of Proverbs, they [the wise men] wanted to declare apocryphal, because there are statements in it contradicting each other. And why did they not declare it apocryphal? They said, the book of Coheleth was not [declared apocryphal], because we have examined it and found its meaning; let us therefore here [the Book of Proverbs] also examine more closely, Shabbath 30, b. Preston (Comment. on Eccles., p. 75), in citing this passage, has omitted the word לא, and therefore mistranslated the whole; he has also given a wrong reference to it, viz., Mishna, Shabbas, ch. x. Plumptre (in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, art. Ecclesiastes, p. 473) quotes it from Preston, with these errors uncorrected.

wealth, &c., but consists in the calm enjoyment of life, in the resignation to the dealings of Providence, in the service of God, and in the belief in a future state of retribution, when all the mysteries in the present course of the world shall be solved.

The method which the sacred writer adopts to carry out this design is most striking and effective. Instead of writing an elaborate metaphysical disquisition, logically analysing and refuting, or denouncing, *ex cathedra*, the various systems of happiness which the different orders of minds and temperaments had constructed for themselves, Solomon is introduced as recounting his painful experience in all these attempts. Thus by laying open, as it were, to the gaze of the people the struggles of a man of like feelings with themselves, who could fully sympathise with all their difficulties, having passed through them himself, and found the true clue to their solution, the sacred writer carries out his design far more touchingly and effectively than an Aristotelian treatise, or the Mount Ebal curses upon the heads of the people, would have done.

The book consists of a *Prologue*, *four sections*, and an *Epilogue*: the Prologue and Epilogue are distinguished by their beginning with the same phrase (i. 1; xii. 8), ending with two marked sentences (i. 11; xii. 14), and embodying the *grand problem* and *solution* proposed by Coheleth; whilst the four sections are indicated by the recurrence of the same formula, giving the result of each experiment or examination of particular efforts to obtain real happiness for the craving soul (ii. 26; v. 19; and viii. 15).

The PROLOGUE — i. 2–11 — gives the theme or problem of the disquisition. Assuming that there is *no hereafter*, that the longing soul is to be satisfied with the things *here*, Coheleth declares that all human efforts to this effect are utterly vain (2) and fruitless (3); that conscious man is more deplorable than unconscious nature: he must speedily quit this life, whilst the earth abides for ever (4); the objects of nature depart and retrace their course again, but man vanishes and is for ever forgotten (5–11).

The FIRST SECTION—i. 11–ii. 26—records the failure of different experiments to satisfy the cravings of the soul with temporal things, thus corroborating the allegation in the Prologue, and also shewing what their disappointment from this point of view led to. Coheleth, with all the resources of a monarch at his command (12), applied himself assiduously to discover, by *the aid of wisdom*, the nature of earthly pursuits (13), and found that they were all fruitless (14), since they could not rectify destinies (15). Reflecting, therefore, upon the large amount of wisdom he had acquired (16), he came to the conclusion that it is all useless (17), as the accumulation of it only increased his sorrow and pain (18). He then resolved to try *pleasure*, to see whether it would yield the desired happiness, but found that this too was vain (ii. 1), and hence denounced it (2); for, having procured every imaginable pleasure (3–10), he found that it was utterly insufficient to impart lasting good (11). Whereupon he compared wisdom with pleasure (12), and though he saw the former had a decided advantage over the latter (13, 14, a.), yet he also saw that it does not exempt its possessor from death and oblivion, but that the wise and the fool must both alike die and be forgotten (14, b. – 16). This made him hate both life and the possessions which, though acquired by industry and wisdom, he must leave to another, who may be a reckless fool (17–21), convincing him that man has nothing from his toil but wearisome days and sleepless nights (22, 23); that there is, therefore, nothing left for man but to enjoy himself (24, a.); yet this, too, he found was not in the power of man (24, b. 25), God gives this power to the righteous and withholds it from the wicked, and that it is, after all, transitory (26).

The SECOND SECTION—iii. 1. – v. 19.—Having shewn in the preceding section that neither *wisdom* nor *pleasure* can ensure lasting good for man, Coheleth now shews that *industry* is also unable to secure it.

All the events of life are permanently fixed (iii. 1–8), and hence the fruitlessness of human labour (9). God has indeed

prescribed bounds to man's employment, in harmony with this fixed order of things, but man through his ignorance often mistakes it (10, 11), thus again shewing that there is nothing left for man but the enjoyment of the things of this world in his possession, being the gift of God to the righteous (12, 13). The cause of this immutable arrangement in the events of life is, that man may fear God, and feel that it is He who orders all things (14, 15). The apparent success of wickedness (16) does not militate against this conclusion, since there is a fixed day for righteous retribution (17); but even if, as is affirmed, all terminates *here*, and man and beast have the same destiny (18–21), this shows all the more clearly that there is nothing left for man but to enjoy life, since this is his only portion (22). The state of suffering (iv. 1), however, according to this view, becomes desperate, and death, and not to have been born at all, are preferable to life (2, 3). The exertions made, in spite of the prescribed order of things, either arise from jealousy (4), and fail in their end (5, 6), or are prompted by avarice (7, 8), and defeat themselves (9–16). Since all things are thus under the control of an Omnipotent God, we ought to serve him acceptably (17–v. 6), trust to his protection under oppression (7, 8), remember that the rich oppressor, after all, has not even the comfort of the poor labourer (9–11), and that he often brings misery upon his children and himself (12–16). These considerations, therefore, again shew that there is nothing left for man but to enjoy life the few years of his existence, being the gift of God (17–19).

The THIRD SECTION—vi. 1–viii. 15.—*Riches* comes now under review, and it, too, is shewn to be utterly unable to secure real happiness (vi. 1–9), since the rich man can neither overrule the order of Providence (10), nor know what will conduce to his well-being (11, 12). And lastly, *prudence*, or what is generally called *common sense*, is examined and shewn to be as unsatisfactory as all the preceding experiments. Coheleth thought that to live so as to leave a good name (vi. 1–4); to listen to merited rebuke (5–9); not to indulge in a repining spirit, but to submit

to God's Providence (10-14); to be temperate in religious matters (15-20); not to pry into everybody's opinions (21, 22)—lessons of prudence or common sense, higher wisdom being unattainable (23, 24); to submit to the powers that be, even under oppression, believing that the mightiest tyrant will ultimately be punished (viii. 1-9), and that, though righteous retribution is sometimes withheld (10), which, indeed, is the cause of increased wickedness (11), yet that God will eventually administer rewards and punishments (12, 13), that this would satisfy him during the few years of his life. But as this did not account for the melancholy fact that the fortunes of the righteous and the wicked *are often reversed all their life-time*, this common sense view of life too proved vain (14); and Coheleth therefore recurs to his repeated conclusion, that there is nothing left for man but to enjoy the things of this life (15).

The FOURTH SECTION—viii. 15-xii. 7.—To shew more strikingly the force of his final conclusion, submitted at the end of this section, Coheleth gives first a *résumé* of the investigations contained in the preceding sections. Having found that it is impossible to fathom the work of God by wisdom (viii. 16, 17); that even the righteous and the wise are subject to this inscrutable Providence, just as the wicked (ix. 1, 2); that all must alike die and be forgotten (3-5), and that they have no more participation in what takes place here (6); that we are therefore to indulge in pleasures here while we can, since there is no hereafter (7-10); that success does not always attend the strong and the skilful (11, 12); and that wisdom, though decidedly advantageous in many respects, is often despised and counteracted by folly (13-x. 3); that we are to be patient under sufferings from rulers (4), who by virtue of their power frequently pervert the order of things (5-7), since violent opposition may only tend to increase our sufferings (8-11); that the exercise of prudence in the affairs of life will be more advantageous than folly (12-20); that we are to be charitable, though the recipients of our benevolence appear ungrateful, since they may after all requite us

(xi. 1, 2); that we are always to be at our work, and not be deterred by imaginary failures, since we know not which of our efforts may prove successful (3-6), and thus make life as agreeable as we can (7), for we must always bear in mind that this is the only scene of enjoyment; that the future is all vanity (8): but as this too did not satisfy the craving of the soul, Coheleth at last came to the conclusion, *that enjoyment of this life, together with a belief in a future judgment, will secure real happiness for man* (9, 10), *and that we are therefore to live from our early youth in the fear of God and of a final judgment*, when all that is perplexing now shall be rectified (xii. 1-7).

The EPILOGUE—xii. 8-12.—Thus all human efforts to obtain real happiness are vain (xii. 8); this is the experience of the wisest and most painstaking Coheleth (9, 10); the Sacred Writings alone are the way to it (11, 12); there is a righteous Judge, who marks, and will in the great day of judgment judge, everything we do; we must therefore fear Him, and keep His commandments (13, 14).

SECTION IV.—IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK.

To understand more clearly the importance of this book, and the gap it fills up in the Old Testament lessons, it will be necessary briefly to examine the state of things to which the doctrine of temporal retribution had in the course of time given rise. Only those who have a special cause to plead will deny that the principle of virtue and vice being visibly rewarded on earth is enunciated, wherever the subject of righteousness and wickedness is spoken of in the Old Testament. God declares, at the very giving of the Law, that he will shew mercy to thousands of those who love Him and keep His commandments, and visit the iniquity of those who hate Him to the third and fourth generation (Exod. xx. 5, 6); that they who honour their parents shall be blessed with long life (*Ibid.* 12). The whole of the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus and the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy are replete with promises of earthly blessings to

those who will walk in the way of the Lord, and threatenings of temporal afflictions upon those who shall transgress His law. The faithful fulfilment of these promises and threatenings, in the early stages of the Jewish history, convinced every Israelite that "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked *every day*," and afforded a source of consolation to which the righteous resorted when the power of the wicked threatened destruction (1 Sam. xxiv. 13-16; xxvi. 23; Ps. vii.; ix.). When David, therefore, received the calamitous tidings that Saul in a malicious freak had caused eighty-five priests to be killed, and that his own life was in imminent danger, he addressed the mighty tyrant in the full assurance of this righteous retribution:

"Why gloriest thou, hero, in wickedness?
The favour of God endureth for ever.
Thy tongue deviseth mischief
Like a sharp razor, thou mischief-maker!
Thou lovest evil more than good,
Lying more than speaking uprightly.
Thou lovest all sorts of destruction, deceitful tongue!
God shall therefore smite thee down for ever,
He will seize thee, and snatch thee out of the tent,
And root thee out of the living land.
The righteous shall see it and fear,
And they shall laugh over him—
'See there the man who made not God his bulwark,
And trusted in the multitude of his riches, strengthened himself
in his wickedness;
But I am as a green olive-tree in the house of God;
I trust in the favour of God for ever and ever;
I will praise Thee, because thou hast executed it,
And hope in Thy name, because it is good before thy saints."

Ps. lii.

Like a net of fine threads is this doctrine spread over the entire Old Testament (compare Psalms xvii. 1, 2; xxvi. 1, 2; xxviii. 1-3; xxxv.; liv. 7-9; lv. 20-24; xc.; cxix.; cxxv. 3; cxxvii.; cxl.; cxli. 10; Prov. x. 6; xi. 5-8. 19; xii. 7; Hag. ii. 15-20; Zech. i. 2-6; viii. 9-17; Malachi ii. 17). It is also propounded in the New Testament. Thus our Saviour says, in his sermon

on the Mount, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. v. 5); and declares that "every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall" not only "inherit everlasting life," but shall receive "*an hundredfold here in this life*" (comp. Matt. xix. 29, with Mark x. 29, 30; Luke xviii. 29, 30).

But whilst provision was made in the New Testament against the difficulties arising from the mysterious inequalities in the distribution of the fortunes of man by the removal of the boundary line between the world that is now and the world that is to come, and the extension of the sphere of retribution, thus affording transcendent consolation to the suffering saint, in the face of the prosperous sinner, and enabling him to say, "Sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. vi. 10); "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. iv. 11); "for the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii. 18): the Old Testament, by limiting the bar of judgment to this side of the grave, yielded no explanation of, or succour under, the distracting sight of the righteous suffering *all their life*, and then dying for their righteousness, and *the wicked prospering and prolonging their days through their wickedness*.

Such a bewildering state of things, as permitted by an inscrutable Providence, frequently engendered jealousy, anger, malice, and revenge on the part of the righteous, who, in despair, were alternately ready to join issue with, or to rise against, the wicked. It was under such circumstances that Psalm xxxvii. was written—

"Be not inflamed against the wicked,
Be not envious at the evil-doers,
For soon shall they be cut down as the grass,
And wither as the green herbage.
Trust in Jehovah and do good,

Rest quietly in the land, and cherish truth,
 And delight in Jehovah,
 And He shall grant thee thy heart's desire.
 Roll thy cause upon Jehovah,
 And trust in Him, He will accomplish it,
 And shall display thy righteousness as the light,
 And thy justice as the noon-day.
 Be silent before Jehovah, and wait on Him,
 Be not inflamed against the successful in his course,
 Against the man who practiseth deceit.
 Abstain from anger, and leave wrath,
 Be not inflamed, so that thou also dost evil;
 For evil-doers shall be cut off,
 And they that wait on Jehovah, they shall possess the land.
 Only a little longer, and the wicked is no more,
 And thou shalt search in his place, but he will be gone;
 While the meek shall possess the land,
 And delight in great peace.
 Let the wicked plot against the righteous,
 And gnash upon him with his teeth;
 The Lord shall laugh at him,
 For he seeth that his day is coming.
 Let the wicked draw the sword, and stretch their bow,
 To cut down the poor and the needy,
 To murder the upright in conduct;
 Their sword shall enter into their own hearts,
 And their bows shall be broken.
 Better the little of a righteous man,
 Than the abundance of many wicked.
 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
 But Jehovah upholdeth the righteous.
 Jehovah knoweth the days of the pious,
 And their inheritance shall be for ever;
 They shall not be ashamed in the time of distress,
 And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
 But the wicked shall perish,
 And the enemies of Jehovah shall vanish like the excellency
 of pastures;
 They shall vanish in smoke.
 The wicked borroweth and repayeth not,
 But the righteous is merciful and giveth;
 For the blessed of Him shall inherit the land,
 And the cursed of Him shall be cut off.
 By Jehovah are the steps of this man fixed,

And He delighteth in his way;
 Though he stumble, he shall not fall,
 For Jehovah supporteth his hand.
 I have been young and am grown old,
 And never have I seen the righteous forsaken,
 Or his seed begging bread;
 Every day he is merciful and lendeth,
 And his seed must be blessed.

“Depart from evil and do good,
 And ever rest quietly;
 For Jehovah loveth righteousness
 And forsaketh not his saints,
 They are always preserved;
 But the seed of the wicked are cut off.
 The righteous shall possess the land,
 And shall dwell therein for ever.
 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom,
 And his tongue uttereth justice,
 The law of his God is in his heart,
 His steps shall not totter.
 The wicked lurketh for the righteous,
 And seeketh to slay him;
 Jehovah leaveth him not in his hand,
 Condemneth him not when he is judged.
 Wait upon Jehovah, and heed His way,
 And He shall raise thee to the heritage of the land.
 Thou shalt see the destruction of the wicked;
 I, too, saw a wicked man, overhearing,
 And spreading as a green, deep-rooted tree,
 Yet he disappeared, and lo! he was no more,
 And I searched for him but he could not be found.
 Mark the pious, and behold the upright,
 For there is a future for the man of peace.
 While the impious are destroyed together,
 The future of the wicked is cut off.
 And the salvation of the righteous is from Jehovah,
 Their strength in time of distress;
 And Jehovah helpeth them and delivereth them,
 He delivereth them from the wicked, and saveth them,
 For they trust in him.”

Since, however, this Psalm, as well as Psalms xlix. and lxxiii.,
 called forth by similar circumstances, endeavour to console the

distressed, and allay the prevailing scepticism in the moral government of God, by assuring the people that this contrariety of fortunes is only *temporary*, and that the righteous shall ultimately prosper and prolong their days *upon the earth*, and the wicked shall suddenly be cut off in great misery, thus keeping within the narrow limits of present reward and punishment; they leave the main difficulty unsolved. Hence the recurrence of this perplexity passing over almost into despair, when these reassurances and consolations were not realised by experience, and when, moreover, the sufferers, however conscious of their innocence, were looked upon as rejected of God, in consequence of some secret guilt. The book of Job, which has so successfully combated the latter notion, shewing that the afflictions of the righteous are not always a proper test of sin committed, only confirmed the old opinion that the righteous are visibly rewarded here, inasmuch as it represents their calamities as transitory, and Job himself as restored to double his original happiness *in this life*.

After the Babylonian captivity, when the political affairs of the nation were such as to render the disparity of the destinies of men and their moral life still more striking, the people began to arraign the character of God —

"Every one that doeth evil
Is good in the sight of Jehovah, and he delighteth in them,
Or where is the God of justice?" — Mal. ii. 17.

"It is vain to serve God,
And what profit is it that we keep his ordinance,
And that we walk mournfully before Jehovah of Hosts?
For now we pronounce the proud happy;
They also that work wickedness are built up;
They even tempt God, yet they are delivered." — *Ibid.* iii. 17. 18.

Awful as this language appears, it had by no means reached its climax. The inheritance of the Lord, which was to be the praise and the ruler of all the earth, was now reduced and degraded to the rank of a mere province by the Persians; her inhabitants, to whom the idea of bondage was most revolting

(comp. Matt. xxii. 17, with John viii. 33), were groaning under the extortions and tyranny of satraps; her seats of justice were filled with most unprincipled and wicked men (Cohemoth iii. 16); might became right, and the impunity and success with which wickedness was practised swelled most alarmingly the ranks of the wicked (*Ibid.* viii. 10, 11).

Under these circumstances, when the old cherished faith in temporal retribution was utterly subverted by the melancholy experience of the reversion of destinies; when the diversified minds of the desponding people, released from the terrors of the Law, began to import as well as to construct philosophic systems to satisfy the cravings of their minds (*Ibid.* xii. 12), and to resort to various other experiments to obtain happiness, the paramount importance of a book which opens a new bar of judgment in the world to come, when all present irregularities shall be rectified by the Judge of the quick and dead, will at once be obvious.

SECTION V. — HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE EXEGESIS OF THE BOOK.

Few books in the Bible have given rise to greater diversities of opinion than Cohemoth. So conflicting were the views about it up to his time, that Luther remarked, "difficult as this book is, it is almost more difficult to clear the author of the visionary fancies palmed upon him by his numerous commentators, than to develop his meaning." What would this sagacious reformer have said, if he could have foreseen the countless speculations of which it has been the subject for the last three hundred years? A complete history of the interpretation of this book would of itself form a large folio. Our object, therefore, in this *sketch*, is simply to give the leading and most striking views which Jews and Christians, in different ages, have formed of Cohemoth.

A. JEWISH EXPOSITIONS.

217, B.C. — 50, A.D. — The Apocryphal book called "the Wisdom of Solomon"¹ may, in a certain sense, be regarded as

¹ The age of this book is a point of great contention; the above figures shew

the first comment upon Coheleth, inasmuch as it imitatively combats the same errors. The evils which were occasioned by the absence of retributive justice, and which had called forth Coheleth, became more general and formidable with the prolonged and increased sufferings of the people, and hence gave rise also to the book of Wisdom. To invest its solemn warnings and salutary lessons with greater weight, the author of the book of Wisdom personates Solomon, and both imitates and quotes the very language of Coheleth, which for similar reasons was also ascribed to this wise monarch.

Having shewn, in the first chapter, that sin separates man from God, and renders him unfit for the acquisition of wisdom, the author of the book of Wisdom introduces, in the second chapter, the wicked as declaring their own views of the life and destiny of man (1-9).

THE BOOK OF WISDOM.

ii. 1. For those who do not judge aright speak among themselves thus: Short and gloomy is our life, and there is no remedy in the death of a man; and no one is known to have returned from Hades.

2. For we are born by chance, and after it we shall be as if we had never existed; for the breath in our nostrils is smoke, and thought is a spark in the beating of our heart.

Not many are the days of his life (v. 19); all his days he eats in darkness, and has much trouble and grief and anger (v. 16); no one has power over the day of death (viii. 8); no one can release from Hades (iii. 22).

For man is chance (iii. 19), and after it he goes to the dead, i.e., to oblivion (ix. 3); the death of man and beast is the same, and both have the same breath or spirit (iii. 19).

the two extremes of the hypotheses about it. As it is beyond our range to enter into a discussion upon this subject, we refer to Calmet's Preface to this book, given by Arnold in his commentary upon the apocryphal books, being a continuation of Patrick and Lowth's commentary on the Bible; Kitto, Cyclop. Bib. Lit., art. Wisdom of Solomon; De Wette, Einleitung in das Alte Test., § 314; Ewald, Geschichte des Volkes Israel, iv., p. 554; Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, iii., pp. 315, 493; Jost, Geschichte des Judenthums, i., p. 376, &c.; Herzfeld, Geschichte des Volkes Israel, ii., p. 75; Grimm, Das Buch der Weisheit, Kurzgefasstes Exegetisches Handbuch zu den Apocryphen des Alten Test. sechste Lieferung, p. 32, &c.

COHELETH.

THE BOOK OF WISDOM.

3. When extinguished, the body turns into dust, and the spirit vanishes like the subtle air.

4. And our name is forgotten in time, and no one remembers our works; and our life passes away like the residue of a cloud, and is dispersed like a mist driven away by the beams of the sun, and crushed by the heat thereof.

5. For our life is a passing shadow, and there is no returning of our end; for it is closed, and no one returns.

6. Come, then, let us enjoy present pleasures, and diligently use the world while young.

7. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and perfumes, let no flower of the spring escape us.

8. Let us crown ourselves with rose buds before they wither.

9. Let none of us be without his share of voluptuousness; let us leave everywhere tokens of our joyfulness, for this is our portion, and this our lot.

COHELETH.

Man, like beast, is of the dust, and turns into dust; his spirit vanishes away like the beast's (iii. 20, 21).

Their name is forgotten (ix. 5), there is no remembrance of those who passed away (i. 11).

When man departs he returns no more (see comment. on i. 11).

Go eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a cheerful heart (ix. 16); rejoice, young man, while young, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thine early life (xi. 9).

Let thy garments at all times be white, and let no perfume be lacking upon thy head (ix. 8).

I did not keep back my heart from any pleasure, this was to be my portion from all my toil (ii. 10); there is nothing better for man than to rejoice in his works, for this is his portion (iii. 22; comp. also ix. 17, and ix. 9).

Those who assert that the book of Wisdom was written either to oppose the erroneous sentiments expressed in Coheleth, or to supplement and vindicate its misunderstood passages,¹ have failed to see that both books owe their origin to the same circumstances, and combat the same errors.²

¹ Augusti, Einleitung in das Alte Test., p. 249; Schmidt, Salomo's Prediger oder Koheleth's Lehren, p. 71, note.

² Comp. Grimm, Introduction to his Comment on the Book of Wisdom, p. 29, &c.

300, B.C. — 550, A.D. — The exact age of the Midrashic literature upon Coheleth cannot now be ascertained. When the prophetic fire began to be extinguished, and the voice of the prophets was gradually dying away, a number of God-fearing teachers arose, who, by their instruction, encouragement, and solemn admonitions, rooted and builded up the people in their most holy faith. As the Bible formed the central point, around which their legends, sermons, lectures, discussions, investigations, &c., clustered, a homiletico-exegetical literature was, in the course of time, developed, called *Midrash* (מדרש), which became as mysterious in its gigantic dimensions, as it is in its origin. Starting with the conviction that all sciences, as well as the requirements of man for time and eternity, are contained in the Scriptures, and that every repetition, figure, parallelism, synonym, word, letter, nay the very shape and ornaments of the letter, or titles, must have some recondite meaning, "just as every fibre of a fly's wing, or an ant's foot, has its peculiar significance," the text was explained in a fourfold manner, viz., 1. פשט, in a simple, primary, or literal; 2. דרש, secondary, homiletic, or spiritual; 3. רמז, allegorical; 4. סוד, recondite or mysterious sense, which was afterwards designated by the acrostic *Pardes*, פדרס, transposing the ד and the ר.

The rules for this exegesis afforded as great a facility for introducing into the text, as for deducing from it, any and every imaginable conceit. A few of them will suffice as a specimen.

1. A word is to be explained both with the preceding and following words (מקרא נדרש לפניו ולאחריו). Thus, וְשָׂרִי אֵשֶׁת, and אֲבָרָם לֹא יֵלְדָה לוֹ וְלֵהָ שִׁפְחָה מִצִּירִית וְשָׂמָּה הָגָר, and Sarai,

¹ מדרש (from דרש, to investigate) properly denotes the investigation or study of the Bible, which, in accordance with the above-mentioned manner in which it was pursued, developed itself in the הלכה (from הלך, to go), current law, fixed rule of life, also called שמעוּת (from שמע, to hear), what was heard or accepted, and הגדה, Chaldee, אנדה, what was said, without having the authority of a law, i.e., free exposition, homilies, moral sayings and legends. It is the collection of the latter development (i.e., of the homilies and legends) which is now called מדרש, or מדרש הגדה.

Abraham's wife, bare him no children; and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar (Gen. xvi. 1), is explained first, and Sarai, Abraham's wife, bare no children to him and to herself (לוֹ וְלֵהָ); and then again, to him (i.e., Abraham) and to her (i.e., Sarai) there was an handmaid (לוֹ וְלֵהָ שִׁפְחָה).

2. Letters are to be taken from one word and joined to another, or formed into a new word (גורעין ומוסיפין ודורשין); thus וְנָתַתָּם (גורעין ומוסיפין ודורשין); then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman (Numb. xxvii. 11), is explained, and ye shall give the inheritance of his wife to him, i.e., the husband, taking away the ו from נָתַתָּם, and the ל from לְשָׂאֵרָו, and forming the word לוֹ, i.e., וְנָתַתָּם אֶת־נַחֲלָתָהּ לְשָׂאֵרָו, deducing therefrom that a man inherits the property of his wife, (שָׂאֵר) (Baba Bathra, iii. 6.)

3. Words containing the same letters are exchanged for one another. Comp. my Commentary on the Song of Songs, p. 27.

4. The letters of a word are transposed; thus עֲמַלְנוּ, our labour (Deut. xxv. 7), is made to mean our children, עֲלַמְנוּ, by transposing the מ and the ל.

5. Letters resembling each other in sound or appearance, or belonging to the same organ, are interchanged; accordingly תוֹרָה צִוְּהָ לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרְשָׁה קְהֵלָת יַעֲקֹב is explained, the Law which Moses has given us is (מֵאֲרָשָׁה) THE PETROTHED OR WIFE of the congregation of Jacob (Deut. xxx. 4), by changing the ו in מוֹרְשָׁה for the א, and the ש for the ו.

6. Every letter of a word is reduced to its numerical value, and the word is explained by another of the same quantity; thus, from the passage, And a'l the inhabitants of the earth were of one language (Gen. xi. 1), is deduced that they all spoke Hebrew, שָׁפָה being changed for its synonym לְשׁוֹן, and הִקְדָּשׁ 5 + 100 + 4 + 300 = 409, is substituted for its equivalent אֲחָת 1 + 8 + 400 = 409. This rule is called גִּמְטְרִיָּא = נִרְמָטִיָּא = γαμμετα, from γράμμα, letter, from its bearing upon the letters.

7. Every letter of a word is taken as an initial or abbreviation

¹ Preston, not perceiving this, could not comprehend how the Rabbins make these two numbers the same. Comment. on Eccles., p. 69.

of a word. Accordingly the long and costly tunic which Jacob made for his beloved Joseph, as an expression of peculiar fondness, indicated the troubles into which the Patriarch plunged his favoured son, inasmuch as פָּסִים (Gen. xxxiii. 13), by this rule of interpretation, called נוטריון = *notaricun*, from *notarius*, a short-hand-writer, one who writes with abbreviations, is פוּטִיפָר סוֹחָרִים יִשְׁמַעְאֵלִים מְדִינִים *Potiphar*, who imprisoned Joseph, and the *merchants*, who bought and sold him again as a slave.

8. The letters of the alphabet are taken in their inverse order, א, the first letter, is expressed by ת, the last letter of the alphabet; ב, the second letter, by ש, the last but one; ג by ר; ד by ק; ה by צ, and so on. Accordingly שֶׁשֶׁחַךְ, *Sheshach*, is explained by בָּבֶל, *Babel* (Jer. xxv. 26; li. 41); פְּשָׁדִים by לֵב קָמִי (ibid. li. 1). This mode of interpretation is called אֶתְבַּשׁ *Athbash*, thereby indicating this inversion.¹

Strange and arbitrary as these rules may appear, it will be seen in the sequel that they have been followed by the ancient translators of the Bible, and in some of the Patristic commentaries. We shall also see that the overlooking of this fact has caused many modern critics to regard the apparent discrepancies between the ancient versions and the Hebrew original, as owing to different readings or wilful corruptions of the text on the part of the Jews, when, in truth, these deviations are simply the result of the application of one or the other of these exegetical rules.

The Midrashic view is, that Solomon wrote this book *to expose the emptiness and vanity of all worldly pursuits and carnal gratifications, and to shew that the happiness of man consists in fearing*

¹ When the reference is omitted in the illustrations of the exegetical rules, the cited explanations will be found in the Midrash Rabba, or Midrash Yalkut, upon the respective passages. For fuller information on this ancient mode of interpretation, we must refer to the excellent treatises of Frankel, Ueber den Einfluss der Palästinen Exegese auf die Alexandrinische Hermeneutik, Leipzig, 1851; Programm zur Eröffnung des jüdisch — theologischen Seminars zu Breslau, Breslau, 1854; Hirschfeld, Die hagadische Exegese, Berlin, 1847; Ben-Chananja, Jahrgang, i., pp. 116 and 227, &c.

God and obeying his commands. When young and joyful, the inspired monarch composed songs; when middle-aged and sober, he wrote wise proverbs and prudential maxims; and when old and weary of life, he described every earthly pleasure as vain and empty.¹ As is frequently the case, these much misunderstood Rabbins have given the proper view of the design of the book, though the nature of the Midrash precluded a regular commentary upon Coheleth in the historico-critical sense of the word.

1 A.D. — It now remained to be shewn how Solomon, who in his old age was seduced by his foreign wives to idolatry, also became a preacher of righteousness in his old age. The elastic rules of interpretation, aided by an oriental imagination, soon contrived to deduce it from the text. In chap. i., verse 12, Coheleth says, "I was king over Israel," *i. e.*, "*and am no more.*" Taking Solomon to be the author of Coheleth, this strange and remarkable assertion legitimately leads to one conclusion only, viz., that there was a period in his life when *he was dethroned*. Hence arose the legend, that when Solomon, elated with riches and wisdom, departed from the ways of the Lord, he was dethroned by Ashmodai, the king of the demons, and expelled from his capital as an example of the effects of sin. It was then that this ex-monarch went about the provinces and towns of the land of Israel mourning over his guilt, and saying, "I am Coheleth, whose name was formerly Solomon, who was king over Israel in Jerusalem, but through my sins have been driven from my throne and residence." Having thus confessed his sins, and denounced the folly of attempting to find satisfaction in earthly pleasures, the penitent Solomon was in his old age reinstated in the possession of his kingdom, where he died, at peace with God and man. There can be no doubt that this view is, *at least*, as old as the Christian era, being found in the earliest Jewish traditions.²

¹ רבי יונתן אמר שיר השירים כתב חזקיה ואחר כך משלי ואחר כך קהלה ומימינו לה רבי יונתן מדרך ארץ כשארם נער אומר דברי זמר הגדיל אומר דברי משל הזקן אומר דברי הבנים רבי חוני חמיו דרבי אמי אמר הכל סודים קהלה בסוף: ילקוט חלק שני קס"ב

² See Midrash Yalkut on Coheleth i. 12.

100–250 A.D. — But though the homiletic (דרש), the allegorical (רמז), and the mysterious (סוד) modes of treating the Bible were adopted by a large majority of the Rabbins, being more suited to the practical and spiritual requirements of their congregations, it must not be supposed that the *literal sense* (פשוט) was excluded, or even neglected. Free enquiry into the text and context of the Bible, and free expression of doubts about the inspiration of any portion of Scripture which was transmitted as canonical, were far more tolerated and encouraged by these Rabbins, who are so often accused of bigotry and persecution (mostly by those who do not understand them), than even in our free England. Thus we find, in the Mishna, that some, after a critical examination of its context, came to the conclusion that this book was not inspired. Others went farther still, and maintained that it contains *heretical sentiments*.¹ Yet these Rabbins were not put out of the synagogue as unfit teachers of those committed to their care.

300–400 A.D. — From the passage in St. Jerome's commentary upon this book, given in the foot-note to p. 15, it will be seen that the doubts with regard to the inspiration of Coheleth had been entirely removed from the minds of the Jews in his days, and that they allegorised it very largely. Thus he tells us that they interpret iii. 2–8 as referring to their past and future history.

"The time for being born and for planting" refer to God's choosing and making Israel his people; "the time for dying and plucking up that which is planted," to their being carried away into captivity; "the time for killing," to their bondage in Egypt; "the time for healing," to their deliverance from it; "the time for breaking down," to the destruction of the temple; "the time for building up," to their building the temple again; "the time for weeping," to the taking of Jerusalem; "the time for laughing," to its restoration a second time; "the time for casting away stones," to the dispersion and casting away of the Jews; "the time for gathering stones," to their being gathered in again from among all nations; "the time for embracing," to the love of God which compassed them about as a girdle (Jer. xiii. 7, &c.); "the time for refraining," to the removing of God's

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 13, &c.

love, and their misery in the captivity, which God shewed to Jeremiah by a girdle hid in a rock and marred; "the time for getting and keeping," to the time of blessing and preserving them; "the time for loosing and casting away," to the time of their rejection; "the time for sowing," to the time of sowing them again; "the time for keeping silence," to the present silence of the prophets; "the time for speaking," to the time when God shall again speak unto them and comfort them in the land of their enemies; "the time for hatred," to the time when they crucified Christ; "the time for love," to the time of the patriarchs, when God loved them; "the time for war," to the time of their impenitence; "the time for peace," to the time when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel be saved.¹

400–500 A.D. — The old view and the allegorising of this book became more and more general. It is related in the Talmud² (Gittin. 68, b), that the fugitive Solomon came before the Sanhedrin, declaring that it was he who had been king over Israel, that they tested the truthfulness of his assertion, and found it to be correct. The indelicate means, however, adopted for this test, as there recorded, shew the vitiated taste of the age in polluting a legend otherwise so attractive and instructive.³ An anecdote, however, related in another part of the Talmud (Abodah Sarah iii.), in connection with Coheleth x. 20, will shew that the strictly literal explanation was not ignored.

The Emperor Antoninus complained once to Rabbi that the great men of Rome annoyed him much. Rabbi made no reply, but took the Emperor into his garden several successive days, and each day pulled a radish out of the ground. Whereupon the Emperor answered, You are right; you shew me thereby that I am to remove these great ones singly, and not all at the same time, lest they rise against me. Why did Rabbi convey his advice in this manner? why did he not say what the Emperor should do? He feared lest it should reach the ears of these great ones, and thereby cause persecution of the Jews. But could he not tell it secretly to the Emperor? He remembered the passage, "The birds of heaven convey the report." — Coheleth x. 20.

¹ Hieron. Com. in loco.

² For the development and completion of the Talmud, see my Commentary on the Song of Songs, p. 24, &c.

³ אני קחתי הייתי מלך על ישראל בירושלים כי מטא גבי סנהדרין אמרו רבנן מכדי שמוה בחדא מילתא לא סריך מאי האי אמרו ליה לבגידו קא בעי לך מלכא לבגידא אמר להו לא שלחו להו למלוכה קאמי מלכא לבגידו שלחו להו אין קאמי שלחו להו בידקו בטרע' שלחו להו במוקי' קאמי וקא תבע להו בגידותיהו וקא תבע לה נמי לבת שבע אימיה אחיהו לשלם' והבו ליה עוקתא ושולחא רחוקא עליה שם כי עיל חזיה סרח ואמי' הכי' הוה ליה בשתותא מיני' גיטין סח ב

600 A.D. — The Chaldee paraphrase,¹ which is the first entire commentary upon this book, based its explanations upon this view. Chap. i. 12 is thus paraphrased:—

When King Solomon was sitting upon the throne of his kingdom, his heart became elated with riches, and he transgressed the word of God; and he gathered many horses and chariots and riders, and he amassed much gold and silver, and he married wives from foreign nations. Whereupon the anger of the Lord was kindled against him, and he sent to him Ashmodai, the king of the demons, and he drove him from the throne of his kingdom, and took away the ring from his hand, in order that he should roam and wander about in the world to reprove it; and he went about the provincial towns and cities of the land of Israel, weeping and lamenting, and saying, "I am Coheleth, whose name was formerly Solomon, who was King over Israel in Jerusalem."

Those passages which are most perplexing to the historico-critical commentator form no difficulty whatever to the Chaldee paraphrast. Chap. ii. 24, where hilarity is recommended as the best thing for the disappointed sons of toil, is referred to the gathering of strength for the service and glory of God:

There is nothing comely for man but that he eat and drink and make his soul see good before the sons of man, to perform the commandments, to walk in the straight path before Him, so that it may be well with him from his labour.

Chap. iii. 17–22, which has been so frequently quoted to shew that Coheleth denies the immortality of the soul, is made to describe *the awful condition of the wicked in the great day of judgment*, and to set forth the necessity of fearing the Lord—

17. I said in my heart, the righteous God will judge in the great day of judgment, because a time is appointed for every thing; and for every work done in this world they will be judged.

18. I said in my heart concerning the children of men, that as for the chastisements and evil events which come upon them, it is God's doing, to

¹ The very inferior style of this paraphrase, as well as *some* of its legends and allusions, shew most unquestionably that it was written at the end of the fifth, or the beginning of the sixth century. But though committed to writing at this period, when the late portions of it were introduced, any one acquainted with the Midrashic literature will at once perceive that it contains legends and Hagadic interpretations as old as, and even older than, the Christian era.

try and to prove them, and to see whether they will return in repentance; He leaves them in rest, and they are healed. But the wicked, who are like cattle, do not repent, therefore they are unalterably convicted by it to do them evil.

19. For the destiny of the wicked and the destiny of the beast of the field there is one destiny for both of them, and as the beast of the field dies, so he dies who does not return in repentance before his death, and the breath of life of both is judged alike in every respect; and the advantage of a sinner over the beast of the field is nothing but the burial-place, for all is vanity.

20. All go to one place; all the inhabitants of the earth are made of dust, and when they die all return to the dust.

21. Who is wise to know the breathing spirit of the children of men, whether it goes upwards to heaven, and the breathing spirit of the beast, whether it goes downwards to the earth?

22. Therefore I saw that there was no good in this world but that a man should rejoice in his good works, and eat and drink and do good to his heart, for this is his good part in this world, to acquire thereby the world to come, so that no man should say in his heart, Why am I giving away money to do charity? I had better leave it to my son after me, or be nursed for it in my old age; because who can bring him to see what will be after him?

With all the allegorising and spiritualising of this paraphrast, he yet anticipated modern criticism, inasmuch as he saw that the deplorable state of things delineated in this book could not possibly refer to the prosperous reign of Solomon, and that it therefore describes the time *when Jerusalem was trodden down under the foot of the Gentiles, and the Jews carried into captivity*. But as he adhered to the traditional opinion that Solomon was the author of the book, the paraphrast was obliged to resort to the expedient that Solomon was transported by the spirit of prophecy into the distant future, whose history he depicts. Hence i. 12 is thus paraphrased:—

The words of prophecy which Coheleth, that is, the son of David the King, who was in Jerusalem, prophesied. When Solomon, the King of Israel, saw by the spirit of prophecy the kingdom of Rehoboam his son, that it will be divided with Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and that Jerusalem and the holy temple will be destroyed, and that the people of Israel will be carried away into captivity, he said, by His word, Vanity of vanities is this world, vanity of vanities is all for which I and my father David have laboured, all is vanity!

800–1040 A.D. — This view of Solomon's career became so popular that it gave rise to a beautiful and entertaining Midrash or Romance, in which the monarch's exile is said to have been three years. During this time he came into the country of Ammon, was met and taken up by the royal cook, whom he soon excelled, and succeeded, by the command of the king. Whilst in this position, the king's daughter was enamoured of him. The king, grieved at it, drove them both away; they however married, and she, by finding the ring which Solomon lost, and which was the cause of Ashmodai being able to dethrone him, was the means of restoring him to his throne in Jerusalem. Being reinstated into his glorious possession, "Solomon sent for his wife's father, the king of the children of Ammon, and said to him, Why hast thou unlawfully destroyed two souls? Tremblingly he replied, Far be it from me! I have not killed them, I only expelled them into the desert, and know not what has become of them. Whereupon Solomon, of blessed memory, said, If thou shouldst see them, wilt thou be able to recognise them? Know then that I am the cook, and thy daughter is my wife. And Solomon sent for her, and she came and kissed her father's hand, who went back to his land in exceeding great joy."¹ Rapoport, who ingeniously tries to shew the psychological and ethical ideas of this legend, aptly compares it to the German "Faust."²

1040–1105. — Rashi,³ the celebrated commentator and founder of the Germano-French Rabbinical literature, though somewhat affected by the reaction in favour of the literal and grammatical exegesis, which took place at, and progressed ever since, the beginning of the seventh century, in consequence of the extravagant length to which the allegorisers had gone, still

¹ This Midrash is printed by the indefatigable Jellinek, in his *Bet ha-Midrash*, vol. ii., pp. 86, 87.

² See the very elaborate article, *Ashmodai*, in his *Erech Millin*.

³ *Rashi*, רש"י, is an abbreviation for רבי שלמה יצחקי, *Rabbi Solomon Yitzchaki*, erroneously explained by Buxtorf, *Rabbi Solomon Jarchi*. He was born at Troyes, in Champagne, in 1040, where also he died, about 1105. Interesting sketches of him are given in *Zunz Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, p. 277, &c.

adheres to the traditional view of this book. He, too, maintains that *Solomon was dethroned by Ashmodai for his sins, and when brought to repentance wrote this book, to reprove the worldly-minded of their folly, and to admonish them by his sad experience to return to the Lord.*

As the commentary of Rashi abounds in grammatical and traditional lore, we give the following specimen of the first chapter:—

Chap. i. 1. *The words, &c.* — Wherever רב־ר is used at the beginning of a book, it shews that it is full of reproof; thus, at the beginning of Deuteronomy, "These are the words (רַב־ר) which Moses spake" (Deut. i. 1), which is seen from the words, and "Jeshurun got fat and kicked" (*Ibid.* xxxii. 15). So also Amos, beginning with "The words of Amos," and continuing, "hear this word, ye kine of Bashan" (iv. 1); the book of Jeremiah, commencing with "The words of Jeremiah," and going on, "ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child" (xxx. 6); and, "The last words of David" (2 Sam. xxiii. 1), which are followed by "but the sons of Belial shall be all of them as the thorns thrust away" (*Ibid.* ver. 6). So here, "The words of Cobelet," are followed by, "and the sun rises" (ver. 5), and "all the rivers flow into the sea" (ver. 7), comparing the wicked to the sun, moon, and sea; so it is interpreted in the book Siphri, from which I gather that the context here speaks of the wicked, who are like the brightness of the sun, which ultimately goes down. There is also another interpretation there, viz., "All the rivers flow into the sea;" what is meant thereby? "It refers to the idolaters, those fools who worship the waters, believing that there is something in them, because they see the ocean, that all the streams flow into it, and yet it is never full; and they do not understand that the same waters which flow into it come back again, for the waters of the streams which run into the sea are the same waters which have run before, for they return by a submarine passage, and go again upon the earth into the sea, and come back again under the sea; therefore the rivers never cease running, and the sea is never full; but there is no reality in the water." Thus far the Siphri. קול־ר, *collector*, because he gathered much wisdom. And so we find that he is called Agur: "The word of Agur (*i.e.*, gatherer) the son of Jakeh" (Prov. xxx. 1), because he gathered wisdom and brought it up again. Others, however, interpret קול־ר *preacher*, because he spoke all his words in an assembly. "King in Jerusalem," *i.e.*, the city of wisdom.

2. *Vanity of vanities, &c.* — Cobelet complains, saying, respecting the creation effected in seven days, that it is altogether vanity of vanities. חַלָּל has a Chatuph Pattach, because it is *construct*, *i.e.*, *The utmost of all vanities*. חַלָּל is mentioned seven times in this verse, referring to the work of the seven days of the creation.

3. *What advantage, &c.* — *תועלת* is reward, advantage. *תמורה* in exchange for. 'עושה *sun*, i. e., law, so it is called in Prov. vi. 23, "the law is light." Every labour for which he gives up the study of the law, what advantage is there in it?

4. *Generation goes, &c.* — However the wicked man may labour and exert himself to oppress and rob, he does not destroy his works, for when this generation is gone, another generation comes, and takes all away from his children, as it is written, "the poor will rob his children" (Job xx. 10).

But the earth abideth for ever. — And who are those that continue? The meek and the humble, who are bowed down to the earth, as it is written, "the meek shall inherit the earth" (Ps. xxxvii. 11). And the Midrash Tanchumah says that all Israel is called *land*, as it is written, "ye shall be a delightful land" (Mal. iii. 12).

5. *And the sun, &c.* — When the sun rises in the morning, and sets in the evening, and travels all the night, then he pants to return to the same place where he rose yesterday, that he may rise there again.

6. *He goes to the, &c.* — *רוח* is the *spirit, tendency* of the sun, called in French *talent*, comp. "whither the spirit was to go" (Ezek. i. 12).

And upon his, &c. — So it will also be to-morrow; the course or circuit which he ran yesterday he goes round to-day. He goes to the south always in the daytime, and comes round by the north in the night. He turns round alternately east and west; sometimes his course is in the day, and sometimes comes round in the night; in the summer solstice he walks, and in the winter solstice the sun turns round. So are the wicked; however the sun may shine, it will ultimately go down; however much that which appertains to them may go on and increase, their end is to return to the place of their defilement. From an unholy place they come, and to an unholy source they return.

7. *All the streams, &c.* — All the streams flow into the sea; and the sea is not full, because they do not remain therein, for the great ocean is higher than any part of the earth, as it is written, "he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth" (Amos ix. 6). And how can one pour out, if not from a higher place to a lower? And the streams flow in channels under the mountains from the ocean, and return again; and this is the meaning of the words, "from the place to which the streams go, there they return again;" so is the wicked man, "in all points, as he came, so shall he go" (v. 16).

8. *All, &c.* — This refers to the third verse. If a man gives up the study of the law to employ himself in idle things, he will find them wearisome and unattainable; and if he is occupied with sight-seeing, his eye will not be satisfied; and if with the hearing of the ear, his ear will not be filled.

9. *What was, &c.* — Nothing is new that a man learns apart from the law; he will find nothing but what had already been in existence since the six days of the creation. But he who studies the law will constantly find in it new things, as it is written, "Let her breasts satisfy thee" (Prov

v. 19); just as the breast, wherein substance is found as long as the infant uses it; and so we find in the Talmud (Tract Chagiga), that R. Eliezer ben Harkanus propounded things which no one ever heard before, not even in the mysterious vision of Ezekiel.

10. *There is, &c.* — If you meet anything apart from the law respecting which it is said, Behold, this is new! whereas indeed it is not new, for it has been in existence in days bygone, only there is no remembrance of the former things, therefore they appear to be new. So also things which will happen in the future, will not be remembered by the generation that will follow them. The Midrash Agadah expounds the words, "there is no remembrance of the former," of the Amalekites, whose remembrance has been destroyed, and the latter part of this verse, viz., "and to the latter," &c., of the Edomites, whose remembrance will be destroyed, as it is written, "And there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau" (Obad. i. 18).

12. *I, the preacher, &c.* — I was king of the whole world, afterwards only over Israel, afterwards only over Jerusalem, and afterwards only over my staff, because it is said, *I was king in Jerusalem*, but am no more now.

13. *And I gave my heart to know*, inquire in the law, which is wisdom, and to understand thereby all the evil work which was done under the sun, mentioned above. And I understood thereby that it is an evil occupation which the blessed God gave to the children of men, namely, "life and death, good and evil" (Deut. xxx. 15). *לעוול* is an evil conduct, occupation. *לעוול* to occupy themselves. *עין* may, however, be taken in the sense of dwelling, or it may signify meditation, thought, so also *לעוול*. The word *נח* means having it before them.

14. *רוח רע* breaking of the spirit, as "be crushed (*רע*), ye people, and be broken" (Is. viii. 9). *רוח* talent. The end of every work terminates in pain of heart.

15. *The crooked, &c.* — He who is perverted when alive, cannot correct himself when dead; he who prepares in the day of preparation, eats on the Sabbath. And our Rabbins refer it to one who committed incest and had a bastard, or to a follower of the law who deserted it, being once right and afterwards became wrong.

And he who separated himself cannot be numbered. — That is, he who separates himself from the number of the righteous cannot be numbered with them when they receive their reward.

16. *I spoke, &c.* — Now, having come down from my greatness, I set my heart to say, Who would have said of me that I should come to this position?

17. *And I have set my heart now to know the nature of wisdom*, and to what it leads, and the nature of madness and folly. *הוללות* madness, confusion, comp. mixed (*קדחת*) with water (Is. i. 21). *שכלות* folly.

I know now that there is a crushing of the spirit even in wisdom, for though a man relies much on his wisdom, and does not keep himself from forbidden things, the result is that he brings anger upon anger. I said I

will multiply horses, and not cause the people to go down into Egypt, but at the end I made them go down. I said I will multiply wives, and they will not turn my heart; and yet it is said of me that "his wives turned away his heart" (1 Kings xi. 4). And it is also said that he relied much on his wisdom, and did many things; as it is written, "The man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal" (Prov. xxx. 1).

How much this eminent commentator has contributed to Biblical exegesis, and how far he has anticipated and influenced modern expositions, will be seen in the sequel; though, to form a proper estimate of what exegesis owes to him, a thorough perusal of all his writings is necessary. The painstaking and honest Gesenius recognised, though not fully, the merits of Rashi, and other Jewish expositors,¹ which bolder and more prejudiced critics deny, mostly without reading their writings.

1085-1155.—To Rashbam² belongs the honour of first elucidating the true design of this book. This distinguished Rabbi, possessed of a highly cultivated and classical mind, clearly saw that i. 2-11 *contains the burden of the argument; that it contrasts the speedy passage of human life with the permanent existence of nature, thus shewing the advantage of the latter over the former; that all the ensuing experiments recounted in this book to dispel the melancholy effect of this contemplation were useless, and that comfort could alone be found in the calm enjoyment of life, in resignation to the dealings of Providence, in the belief in a future state, when all that is perplexing in the present state of things shall be rectified.*

Rashbam moreover saw that the first two verses and epilogue of Coheleth were subversive of the Solomonic authorship of the book. But instead of adhering to this alternative, which could hardly be expected from an expositor living in a period when

¹ See the Dissertation prefixed to his Manual, Hebrew and German Lexicon, 3rd ed., Leipzig, 1828, and the translation of it by Dr. Robinson, in the American Biblical Repository for 1833.

² Rashbam, רשב"ם, is the acrostic of רבי שמואל בן מנחם, Rabbi Samuel ben Meier; he was the grandson of Rashi, and was born about 1085, and died about 1155. See Zunz, zur Literatur und Geschichte, i., p. 70, &c.

historical exegesis was struggling hard to emerge from the abyss of allegory, he contented himself with the admission that these portions were added by others. The marvel is, that he has said and done so much. His style is simple and beautiful; and the commentary, which has only recently been published, by the praiseworthy Jellinek,¹ besides evolving the design of the book, also contains valuable criticisms. Yet all that Ewald said in noticing the book was, "Although we cannot expect any very great profit from the learned Rabbins of the middle ages for the Old Testament hermeneutics of the present day, and especially from their writings upon such books as Coheleth and the Song of Songs, yet they deserve publication for the history of interpretation."² We cannot say that if Ewald had perused this commentary he would have formed a different estimate of it. Every one acquainted with the writings of this very learned but very crotchety and prejudiced writer knows that he runs down every book which he has not written himself, or which does not repeat or does not eulogise what he has said. How different from Gesenius!

The following is a specimen of Rashbam's commentary:—

1. *The words of Coheleth, &c.*—Solomon is called Coheleth, because he gathered wisdom from all the children of the East, and was wiser than any man, as he is also called in another place, "Agur (gatherer), the son of Jakeh" (Prov. xxx. 1), *King*, because he was king in Jerusalem.

2. *Vanity of vanities, said Coheleth.*—He has not as yet said it, except in these words, where he repeats them in order to shew, in general and in particular, that all is vanity. Parallel passages to this are found in Ps. cxv. 1, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us;" Ps. xciii. 3, "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up;" and Ps. xcii. 10, "For lo, thy enemies, O Lord, for lo, thy enemies," beginning first with the predicate, and then mentioning the subject. Because he is anxious to give the subject, therefore he brings it in the middle of the sentence, and then begins his remarks again. So it is here; he mentions the name of Coheleth in the first part of the sentence, and then resumes the subject and proceeds.

¹ Commentar zu Koheleth und dem Hohen Liede von R. Samuel ben Meier, herausgegeben von Adolph Jellinek, Leipzig, 1865.

² Jahrbücher der Biblischen Wissenschaft von Heinrich Ewald, Jahrb. vii., p. 153.

These two verses were not written by Cobelet, but by him who compiled these words as they are at present. What he means by "vanity of vanities" is, that he gave his heart to search and to investigate the affairs of this world, and found all vanity.

3. *What advantage, &c.*—All these words refer to what is said below, "Nothing is good for man but that he should eat and drink," &c. (*infra*, ii. 4.) That is to say, all these works of man are vanity, and there is no work so good for man as that he should eat and drink, and rejoice with his portion. מִיִּתְיוֹן, *What reward and advantage has a man from all his labour that he labours under the sun?* for his end is to pass away and vanish from the world, and return no more. According to this explanation, there is a connection between this sentence and the sequel. "*Under the sun*," because there is no hiding-place from its heat, therefore he mentions it; and it is the same as the phrase "under heaven."

4. *One generation goes and another comes*, for all die and return to the dust, but the earth remains for ever, that is to say *abides*, for it does not move from its place.

5. *And the sun rises.*—In the morning he rises in his place in the east, and in the evening he goes down and sets in the west, and then travels all night, because he pants and hastens to reach his place by the time of the morning, where he rose to-day. And also to-morrow he will rise there, and travel under the sea from the east towards the south, and then go through the south and west until he turns and goes to the north till he reaches his place in the east. When the sun is in the north, and gradually approaches the east, the word סוֹבֵב is properly used for it.

6. *Round, &c.*—This clause is a repetition of the words, "he goes to the south and returns to the north," that is to say, he returns and goes round all the quarters of the world. "And on its circuits the wind returns," so it always goes round again on its movements and courses, and goes round all the quarters of the world; but man is to-day here and to-morrow in the grave, and his works cease, so that he is remembered no more; therefore it is said, *What advantage has man?*

7. *And the sea, &c.*—For if it were full, the streams would no longer flow into it. "To the place where the rivers go, there they go again." So to-morrow they will go again into the sea, for they do not leave off their habit and course; but man leaves his course and habit, he vanishes away from the world. All this refers to "What advantage hath man?"

8. "*All things, &c.*"—All the works of this world are wearisome, for no man can enumerate them all. "The eye is not satisfied with seeing," for man looks out constantly, and hopes for new things. "The ear is not full with hearing." The ear constantly hears, and desires to hear, the works which are done in the world. Because the ear is hollow, therefore the word קָלָא, *to fill*, is used. יָצִים is *intransitive, weary, faint*. Comp. Deut. xxv. 18.

9. *What was, &c.*—And what advantage has man in all this, since what

has been long ago that will be in the future, and what has been done long ago will be done again, for there is nothing new under the sun.

10. *Is there anything, &c.*—If there be anything of which it is said, Behold there is something new, it is not true, for such a thing has happened long before us.

11. *There is no remembrance, &c.*—This refers to the question, What advantage has man? לְרִשְׁוֹנִים, *i.e.*, the children of men who were born before us in this world have no remembrance, since they have been dead long ago, and their memory is lost. And also succeeding men (לְאַחֲרֵינוּ), those who will come after us, will not be remembered by those who will follow them, for all die, and will be remembered no more. For if a man dies to-day, there will not be born another man like him, since men are not like each other; but other defunct creatures are remembered, for when one of them dies to-day, another is born like unto it; therefore those who see it say, "This creature is like unto the one which died;" hence there is a difference in this respect between rational and irrational creatures. For this cause it is said, *What advantage has man?*

12. *I, Cobelet, &c.*—Because I was king, and had leisure on account of my greatness.

13. *And I gave it, &c.*—To enquire in the works of the world, and I found that it is an evil employment which God has given to man to occupy himself therewith. עָנָן is from עָנָה, changing the ה into a ו, and לְעִנּוֹת is from the same root (עָנָה), therefore the repetition is idiomatic, just as we find לְעִנּוֹת בָּנִין from עָנָה and לְעִנּוֹת בָּנִין from עָנָה, both having the same signification.

14. *The inclination of the spirit.* רָצוֹה is from רָצָה, *to desire*, just as רָצוֹה is from רָצָה *to liken*, and עָנָה from עָנָה, *to humble, to afflict*. רִצָּה is *talent* in French.

15. *The crooked, &c.*—If a man has perverted his works, he can never be right in his works before God. And he who has omitted anything, the omission can never be counted among the other things which he has dutifully discharged.

16. *I said in my heart, &c.*, *i.e.*, סִפְּשִׁימִי = *pensai moi* in French. לְאִמּוֹר, *thus I said*. מִלִּי more than all the wise men who were before me in Jerusalem before I was born.

17. *And I gave my heart, &c.*—רָצָה, *i.e.*, לְרָצָה comp. רָצָה יִשְׂרָאֵל. The word רָצָה has the same meaning as in chap. ii. 2. שְׂכָלוֹת, *wisdom*. The words are repeated, because of the former phrase, *to know wisdom*, which is repeated. רָצָה, *gratification, inclination*, like רָצָה רָצָה; and as עָנָה, from עָנָה, *to desire*; מְרָצָה, from מְרָצָה, *to want*; עָנָה, from עָנָה, *to be above*; מְרָצָה, from מְרָצָה, *to meditate*; so רָצָה, is from רָצָה, *to desire*.

18. *For in much, &c.*—Because of much wisdom a man thinks deeply about everything which the eyes see, and therefore he is much irritated. וְרָצָה is a repetition of the same sentence; because he increases much wisdom

and much knowledge, he meditates and pries into the works which God has done in the world, desiring to know why he made them thus; because he does not understand them, hence he is irritated, and increases his pain through the multitude of his thoughts.

The difference between Rashbam and Rashi is remarkable, and shews the striking progress Biblical exegesis has made. Whilst the grandfather constantly refers to the Midrash Tan-chuma, the Midrash Agadah, and the Rabbins whose allegories he adopts, the grandson has not a single allusion to the Midrash, but firmly adheres to the text and context, tracing the logical sequence of every verse, and explaining the difficult grammatical forms and words.

1092–1167. — It cannot be said that Ibn Ezra or *Rabe*,¹ as he is sometimes called, did as much for *evolving* the design of this book in the Spanish school of exegesis, in which he deservedly occupies so distinguished a position, as Rashbam has done for it in the Germano-French school.

Ibn Ezra, too, maintains that Solomon wrote this book in his *old age*, to give the new and rising generation the benefit of his past experience.* As to the design of *Cohemoth*, Ibn Ezra believes that *since the works of God, though good in themselves, do not produce a good effect upon all men, owing to the various dispositions, modes of thinking, &c., &c., of the recipients, — just as the same sun which bleaches the garment tans the face of the fuller, — the Lord inspired Solomon to explain these things, and to teach the right way, to shew that all the devices of man are vanity, that the fear of God can alone make him happy, and that this fear can only be obtained by the study of wisdom.*

The following is Ibn Ezra's introduction to *Cohemoth*, and the first chapter of his commentary: —

¹ *Rabe*, רמ"ב, is an abbreviation for *Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra*, רבי אברהם בן עזרא. He was born in Toledo, in 1092, and died in Rome, in 1167. See Reland, *Analecta Rabbinica*; Vitæ celeberrimorum Rabbiorum, pp. 69–80; Ersch und Gruber, *Encyclop. i.*, pp. 79–84; Fürst, *Biblioth. Judaica i.*, pp. 251–257.

* עניני הספר יורד כי באחרית ימיו חיברו כאלו יאמר לדורות הבאים כך וכך נסתי בים היי See his commentary on i. 12.

PREFACE TO ECCLESIASTES.

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. As a captured stranger longs to return to his own country, and be with his own people, so the intellectual spirit pants to get up to the highest stages, until it reaches the abode of the spirits, which dwell not in houses of clay. For bodies are compared to houses, whose foundations are in the dust, hence we find "angels, whose dwelling is not with flesh." — (Dan. ii. 11.) This is the case when the spirit — washed and purified from the impure lusts of the flesh, which are despicable, and defile holiness, lowering it into the depths of hell — determines to know its origin, and to see its own mystery with the unclouded eye of wisdom, so that that which is afar off is brought near, and the night becomes like the day; then it will be prepared to know truths comprised in faithful words, which will be indelibly engraved upon it in its separation from the body, for the writing is the writing of God, therefore the spirit sent into this world is confined in the body until death. All this is for its own benefit, and although it suffers for some years, yet it will rest and rejoice world without end.

All works are divisible into four classes: — 1. Altogether good. 2. Good for the most part, but having also some evil. 3. Altogether evil. 4. Evil for the most part, but having also some good. The first class is the portion of the sons of God, the second belongs to men on earth, and the two remaining have no existence, for the Lord God could not create anything but what is good. Everything being good, as a whole, as it is written, "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good" (Gen. i. 31). And if there was some evil amongst it, it was slight, for it is not compatible with divine wisdom to withhold much good because of a little evil. The cause of the evil, however, lies in the imperfection of the recipient, and we cannot compare the works of God to any other work but his own, since all are his own works. Thus we find that the sun makes the spread out cloth white, at the same time that he makes the face of the fuller brown. Here, then, the same operation comes from the same operator, and yet there are different results, because the recipients are different.

The thoughts of men differ in proportion to the difference of the nature of their bodies; and their different natures again arise from the various conditions of the heavenly bodies, and the place of the sun, and those which are influenced by him, and by various climates, religions, and food, and many other innumerable things; and yet every one thinks himself right.

Therefore the Lord God of Israel has stirred up the spirit of Solomon, his friend, to explain desirable things, and teach the right way.

For no work made by a creature can stand, as in fact no creature is able to create any substance, nor to annihilate any; all the works of the creature being only imitations and non-essentials; as, to separate that which is united, and unite that which is separated, to set in motion that

which is at rest, and to set at rest that which is in motion. The works of man are therefore altogether nothing and vanity, except to fear the Lord.

No man can attain the fear of the Lord, unless he ascends the ladder of wisdom, and is built and established on understanding.

COMMENTARY.

Chap. i. 1. *The words, &c.* — It is written that Solomon “spake three thousand parables, and that his songs were a thousand and five” (1 Kings iv. 32). Now, a parable is a thing with which another is compared, as we find, “Put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel” (Ezek. xvii. 2). Here the parable is the great eagle, and the thing compared with it is Nebuchadnezzar. But the expression (שיר) *song* is generally placed at the beginning, and (דבר) *word* in the middle; but because Solomon was desirous to indite words which should impress the heart, he began with the expression (דבר) *words*. דבר, *words*, has not, however, always the same importance, as may be seen either from the following verse, or from this verse itself. Here the following verse also shews the impressiveness designed in the first verse. *Cohemoth* is Solomon, for there was no other king of the sons of David, the anointed of the Lord, besides Solomon; he was called *Cohemoth* (חִמּוֹת), because wisdom was gathered in him. He mentions the residence of his dominion, because it was his glory, as we find the king of Jerusalem was called Melchisedec; for Jerusalem was called Salem, as is evident from Ps. lxxvi. 2.

2. *Vanity of vanities, &c.* — By *vanity* (הֶבֶל) *Cohemoth* describes the empty things of this world, and הֶבֶל is construct to הֶבֶלִים, although there are no *Segoleth nouns* which change in the construct, except שֶׁבַע (Exod. vii. 28), קִנּוּי וְלִקְחָהּ (Isa. xxvi. 20), קִסְסָה חֲמִיתָהּ (Hab. ii. 15), and even these have a Patach, and the word in question has Tzere. The repetition of the same noun in the genitive plural is used either for *superlatively good*, as מֶלֶךְ מְלָכִים, *King of Kings*, i. e., *the highest king*; or for *superlatively bad*, as עֲבָד עֲבָדִים, *servant of servants*, i. e., *most abject servant*; hence הֶבֶל הֶבֶלִים *vanity of vanities*, denotes *utmost vanity*; so also הָאֲנָשִׁים הַלְלוּהוּ, *surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie*; to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity (Ps. lxii. 10), the כִּנּוּי בְּהֶבֶל being the comparative, as the כִּנּוּי בְּיִשְׂרָאֵלִים, *more than all who were before in Jerusalem* (Eccles. ii. 9), and in כִּנּוּי הָאֲנָשִׁים, *I have more understanding than all my teachers* (Ps. cxix. 99), meaning, if men were to be put in a balance with vanity, they would be lighter than vanity. The repetition, “vanity of vanities,” indicates *perpetuity*, as “the floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice” (Ps. xciii. 3), and “they compassed me about, yea, they compassed me about” (*Ibid.* cxviii. 11). That it should not be said, *Granted that there is vanity in the things of this world, but there is solidity as well, he therefore adds, all is vanity.*

3. *What advantage, &c.* — יִצְרָח is according to the analogy of יִצְחָק, and is derived from the verb, the *v* of which is defective (i. e. *ו*), as is evident from the Hiphil. The meaning is, since all is vanity, what profit has man from all his work. The sense of the phrase, *under the sun*, is *revolving time*; for the sun alone is the cause of time, since the day depends upon the sun, from its rising to the setting thereof; the night, too, is from sunset to sunrise, whether the moon and the stars are seen or not; so also seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter depend upon the inclination of the sun, whether northward or southward. Although the moon has strong influences upon rivers and aqueous plants, and upon the human brain; although Pleiades has binding influences, and Orion loosing influences; yet all their influences put together, when compared with those of the sun, are like one of its many parts. Although the sun is one, yet its influences differ, both according to the changes of the hundred and twenty planets which form the seven planets, and according to the change of the course of all of them, caused by the motion of the greatest sphere which projects. Therefore the position of the heavenly bodies will never be found alike, even for one moment. Hence it is written in the book Yezirah, cap. i. § 4, “Two letters build two houses, three build six, &c., &c., till the mouth cannot tell, nor the ear hear, this endless transposition and multiplication.” But the labour of searching after wisdom, in order to enlighten the mind, has an advantage; for the spirit of man is not subject to the sun.

4. *One generation, &c.* — Because everything under the sun is composed of four elements, from which they proceed and to which they return, viz., fire, air, water, and earth, these four are adduced; and the earth is mentioned first, because she is as it were the mother; then the sun is mentioned, the abode of fire, because of its great heat, and this is the generating fire; then the air and the water. Respecting the earth, *Cohemoth* says that all things created out of it will return to it, just as we find, “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return” (Gen. iii. 19); and that the

¹ According to Ibn Ezra on Job xxxviii. 31, Pleiades has the power of consolidating vegetation, and Orion of dissolving it.

² What the book Yezirah — which Ibn Ezra quotes — means by “two letters form two houses,” is, that two letters yield to combinations or transpositions, e. g., אב and נא; three yield six, e. g., אבש, אשם, אמש, אבש, אשם, אמש, and so on. In order to ascertain how often a certain number of letters can be transposed, the product of the preceding number must be multiplied with it. Thus —

| | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|-----|---|------------------|
| Letter | 2 | × | 1 | = | 2 |
| | 3 | × | 2 | = | 6 |
| | 4 | × | 6 | = | 24 |
| | 5 | × | 24 | = | 120 |
| | 6 | × | 120 | = | 720 |
| | 7 | × | 720 | = | 5040, and so on. |

earth will continue undiminished as long as one generation comes from it and another returns to it. It may be that the word *רוי* means *sojourners*; thus we find "to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Ps. lxxxiv. 10).¹

5. *The sun rises, &c.* — Mathematicians have long since propounded, that all visible creatures are divisible into ten parts, and the sun is the greatest of all, and there is none like it; it is the root in the universe, just as the point is in geometry, and the number one in mathematics; and the sense is, although the sun has a motion rising and setting, it returns back to its former place, and the place in which the sun rises to-day is nearer than the one in which it will rise to-morrow; and because its motion is to the north and south, therefore it rises twice a-year in one place, and once from the extremity of the south, and once from the extremity of the north, thus completing a year. But though this is also the case with the moon, the five planets, and all the heavenly bodies, yet is the sun alone mentioned, because of its being the greatest, as we find, "in them has he set a tabernacle for the sun" (Ps. xix. 4), not mentioning the stars. *שואף* means *panting*, comp. *בְּאֵרֹחַ נִפְסֵי שְׂאֵפָהּ רוּחַ*, at her pleasure she snuffs up the wind (Jer. ii. 24), thus, as it were, panting after air in her desire to return to the place.

6. *It goes, &c.* — Some say that this verse also refers to the sun, which goes to the north and to the south, and explain *רוי* to mean *the side*; but this is incorrect, as is evident from the words, *וְעַל כִּי־לֹא־יָשֹׁב רוּחַ*, and the wind returns upon its circuits; the whole verse therefore refers to the wind, which moves to the north and to the south, when it goes round from the south to the north by the east, and when it goes from the north to the south it goes by the west, therefore *Cohemoth* says, *סֹבֵב סָבִיב הוּלֵךְ רוּחַ*, round round goes the wind; and at the end of the year it turns again on its circuits, when the sun turns, which is the cause of all the motions of the wind; and the navigators know these things, for these motions vary in the same manner every day in the year.

7. *All the rivers, &c.* — Although all the streams flow into the sea, yet it does not overflow, so as to transgress the law and cover the earth, because the waters which flow into it return constantly to their own place, for there is evaporation constantly rising from the sea to the sky, which forms the clouds; the sweet waters only ascending because of their lightness, and the vapour is converted into rain, as it is written, "He calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth" (Amos v. 8); and the waters of the springs are from the rain, and the streams are from the springs, as we see in the time of drought that most of the springs are dried up; and again we find it written, "The brook dried up, because there had

¹ Ibn Ezra means thereby all living beings which have their temporal abode upon this earth, including all animal and vegetable life. This explanation of *רוי*, everything that sojourns, that moves about upon the earth, is also followed by Mendelssohn and Preston.

been no rain in the land" (1 Kings xvii. 7); and this explains how the streams return again from the place whither they went. And Solomon has not explained the cause of the waters returning to their place, just as he did not explain the cause of the sun returning from the west to the east; whether it is above the sky, or from the sides, or it is below the earth, being an orb, and placed in the midst of the highest sphere; for all these things require proofs, or such an explanation of everything seen by the eyes as not to require proof. And the object in mentioning these four, viz., the sun, which is the element of fire, the air, the water, and the earth, is because all things existing under the sun — plants, beasts, men, the fowls, and the fish of the sea — are all formed of them. And if the elements return back to their own place, where they formerly were, how can those abide which were formed of them? and as the creatures are vanity at their beginning, so they will be at their end; and if man is vanity, much more so is his work, which is accidental, and still more his thought, which is an accident of an accident, as it is written, "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men that they are vanity" (Ps. xciv. 11).

8. *All, &c.* — Some interpret *נַעֲמִים* transitively, *wearying others*, according to the analogy of *קָלָאִים*, but this is incorrect, for *נַעֲמִים* is *neuter*, as the other instance, *נָעִי וְנָעָה*, faint and weary, in Deut. xxv. 18, shows: and if it were as they interpret it, it ought to have been *נַעֲמִים*, the *l'iel*, comp. *אֵל הַיָּגֵעַ עֲבָדָה*, do not weary these (Josb. vii. 3); but *נַעֲמִים* is *intransitive*, meaning that the things themselves are faint and defective, there is no strength in them, therefore man cannot describe them. Having described the four elements, which continue in the same position, and if they are set in motion they return again at the end to their former position; knowing the general principle and the particulars ensuing therefrom, that they do not continue one moment in the same position, therefore, no man is able to describe them.

And the eye is not satisfied with seeing them; for the cause of the eye seeing objects is that they are reflected in the pure air. And they do not abide even one moment. The ear is not filled with hearing the particulars, for the cause of hearing is also the entrance of the air containing the forms of the sounds, and these two cannot abide; therefore the eye cannot master them in their particulars, nor can the ear hear all their numbers, because they are innumerable to man, for the Creator alone knows both generals and particulars, for they are all the works of His hands.

9. *That which was, &c.* — The singer (David) said of the heavenly Being, that "He commanded, and they were created; He hath also established them for ever and ever" (Psalm cxlviii. 5); and of the earthly beings he said, that "His name alone is excellent" (*Ibid.* v. 13). That is to say, they are altogether vanity. The words "what was will be" refer to the spheres and their hosts, for they are like wheels continually turning round, and their beginning is like their end, and their end like their beginning.

What was done will be done.—This refers to the different kinds of beings, viz., man, horses, every species of animal and vegetable life, the propagation of which depends upon the motions of the heavenly bodies. As long, therefore, as these heavenly bodies abide, these kinds will also continue in the same way, being formed according to these heavenly bodies. And the meaning is, "Although I cannot enumerate the particulars, the generals are observed, known, and described; and in this way it is seen that the upper and lower worlds continue in the same manner, and there is nothing new."

10. *Is there, &c.*—*יש* is frequently found to denote something RARELY met with; comp. *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר הָיָה הָעָנָן וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר הָיָה הָעָנָן*, and when it rarely happened that the cloud rested, &c. (Numb. ix. 20); *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, it sometimes happens that one scatters and yet increases (Prov. xi. 24); *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, it sometimes happens that a wicked man is prolonged in his wickedness (Eccl. vii. 15), for, generally speaking, "the years of the wicked are shortened" (Prov. x. 27). If any thing should seem new to one, the same has already happened before. *עֲלָמִים* means times, ages; thus, *צִוְרֵי עֲלָמִים*, rock of ages (Is. xxvi. 4); *מְלָכִיּוֹתָיִךְ*, thy kingdom is a kingdom of all ages (Psalm cxlv. 13); *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, a salvation for all ages, i. e., everlasting (Is. xlv. 17).

11. *There is no remembrance, &c.*—If it is questioned whether such a novel thing has actually happened in former days, it is because there is no remembrance of former things; which will also be the case with the things that will take place in days to come, they too will be forgotten at a later period. Hitherto Solomon spoke in general, and now he begins to take up specifically those things which occurred to him.

12. *I, Coheleth, &c.*—The contents of this book shew that Solomon wrote it in his advanced days, and appeals as it were to the new and rising generation, and tells them, 'such and such things I have tried in my lifetime, and forsooth I could try everything because of my being king.' *Over Israel* is mentioned, because there was always among them prophets and wise men, such as the children of Zerach,¹ and not as the sons of Kedar who dwelled in tents, and thereby shewing that he was king over a wise and intelligent people. *Jerusalem* is mentioned, because its situation is advantageous for the reception of wisdom. It is known that the habitable world is divided into seven parts, and there are no men with proper faculties to acquire wisdom except in the three central parts, for the foremost and the hindmost parts, being either too hot or too cold, interfere with the nature of man. It is, moreover, known that the latitude of Jerusalem is 33 degrees, and this is the centre of the habitable world, for habitation is impossible except beyond the degrees where the sun inclines either in the north or south.

13. *And I gave my heart, &c.*—It is better to connect this verse with

¹ Ethan, Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the celebrated sages, who were contemporaries with Solomon. Comp. 1 Kings v. 11; 1 Chron. ii. 6.

what follows; and the meaning is that he searched after knowledge. 'This is the sense of *לָחַץ*. Comp. *לָחַץ הָאָרֶץ*, from searching out the land (Numb. xiii. 25), i. e., to see desirable things, and the source of all things, though this is an unpleasant task, since men are often employed in unprofitable things. *לָחַץ*, to be employed, is from the same root as *עָנָן*, employment. Some, however, maintain that it is from the same root as *עָנָן*, afflicted, and say that the verb has here the same signification as in *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, I was greatly afflicted (Ps. cxvi. 10), and *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, he humbled the pride of Israel (Hos. v. 5). But it is more likely that it denotes to testify, as *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, thou shalt not testify against thy neighbour (Exod. xx. 16); and even *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, in Ps. cxvi. 10, is to be taken in the same sense, just as we find *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, and Job declared (Job iii. 2), and this is evident from the immediately following words, *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, I have said in my haste; compare also *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, the Lord will hear them (Ps. lv. 20), i. e., he will testify against them. And when Coheleth had employed himself with discovering the nature of things, he found that they were vanity and striving after the wind. The meaning of the phrase *under heaven* is the same as *under the sun*. It may be that in the words *under heaven*, as in *under the sun*, Coheleth alludes to the upper sphere, where all the heavenly hosts are. Now the knowledge of astrology is connected with the forty-eight forms of the sphere, and after Coheleth had employed himself to learn by this science the nature of all things which are produced by the power of heaven, he saw that it was a sore and difficult employment, because of the limited knowledge which man has, to enumerate the causes and effects, as there is no number to the heavenly hosts, and the ancients knew no more than 1022. This is moreover proved by the connection of *under heaven* with *there is an appointed time for everything* in iii. 1. So also is the phrase to be understood in ii. 3.

14. *I saw all the, &c.*—The meaning of *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר* may be the same as *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, Ephraim feeds on wind, and follows after the east wind (Hos. xii. 2), i. e., feeds upon that which neither profits nor satisfies; *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, wind, means emptiness, because the wind escapes in various directions, so that no man can lay hold on it; thus we find *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, they sow wind (Hos. viii. 7), and *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, the wind passes over it (Ps. ciii. 16). It is, however, more likely that *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, as *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, signifies thought, just as *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, two different forms of *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, have the same meaning.

15. *The crooked, &c.*—*וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר* is participle passive, according to the analogy of *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*, and may be derived from two different roots, one regular (*וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*), and the other irregular (*וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר*), signifying the same thing. The word *וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְשֶׁנֶּאֱמַר* is intransitive, and, according to the first interpretation of the two preceding verses, the meaning is, having seen that everything is vanity, this vanity cannot be rendered solid, for that which is defective cannot be rectified, because its nature is radically defective; and he who is defective cannot be numbered with the perfect. This interpretation implies an omission of

בָּל, *man*, before חָסִיד, or takes חָסִיד as an *adjective*; as ראשון, *the first*, and אחרון, *the last*. חָסִיד may also be regarded as referring to קָצוּה; so that קָצוּה by itself would denote *naturally defective*, and חָסִיד קָצוּה, *accidentally defective*. If we, however, adopt the second interpretation, viz., that man is born in defective circumstances, then man has no power to perfect himself, and it is found that he who occupies himself with the investigation of the nature of things by the operation of the heavenly bodies, occupies himself uselessly; and this is the case with most men and most of their works.

16. *I said, &c.* — Because the heart is the habitation of the spirit, and is created first in the body — for it is like a king, and the intellect like its minister — therefore it is used for wisdom, and knowledge, and taste, and the operation of thought being the first receptacle of the heavenly soul; just as lips are used for language, because words proceed out of them. Hence it is said, "A wise prudent heart" (1 Kings iii. 12), "He who buys a heart loves his soul" (Prov. xix. 8).

I have increased and added wisdom, i. e., he compiled and learned the wisdom of the ancients, and added to it.

And my heart saw much wisdom, i. e., which he did not compile. The *adverb* הַרְבֵּה, like רַב, is construed both with the singular and with the plural, comp. בְּרַבְרֵבָה יְהִי, *for they shall be many* (infra, xi. 8), the *infinitive absolute* has a quametetz; comp. הַרְבֵּה אֲרֵבָה, *multiplying, I will multiply* (Gen. xxii. 17).

17. *And I gave, &c.* — Having learned wisdom, and added to it, I gave my heart to know the nature of folly (comp. בְּהוֹלֵל בָּדָם, *and he feigned himself mad in their hand* (1 Sam. xxi. 14), and the nature of wisdom, which is the opposite of folly, although this also is a vain striving).

18. *For in much, &c.* — Because when he sought to know wisdom, he found that the wise man, who understands the affairs of the world through his great knowledge, has constant provocation and pain, and has no pleasure in his children, because he knows that their end is to die, either in his lifetime or afterwards; nor does he rejoice in riches, which fly away like a bird, and cannot help or save in the day of trouble; and the day of death stares into his eyes.

It will be seen from this specimen, and still more from other parts of the commentary, that the peculiar philosophical and astrological notions which Ibn Ezra entertained greatly interfered with his tracing the logical sequence of the text, inasmuch as he constantly introduces his favourite theories into the declarations of Coheleth. Still, the commentary is a masterpiece, and a storehouse of varied learning. It contains more grammatical and lexicographical lore than any modern exposition of

Coheleth we have yet seen, and some of his ingenious criticisms deserve the greatest attention of grammarians.

Thus, in trying to explain why the superior power of wisdom is characterised as excelling the strength of *ten* mighty men (chap. vii. 19), Ibn Ezra remarks —

The number *ten* is mentioned, because it is the arithmetical completion, as this decade is the highest of all, for all above it are merely units. Moreover, since the main strength of a thing lies in its beginning, middle, and end, the א (*one*) being in Hebrew the first or beginning, the י (*ten*) the end, and the ה (*five*), together with ו (*six*), form the middle [of this number ten]; hence these four letters אהוי constitute the original vowels: and no word or syllable can be pronounced without one or the other of these letters.¹

On xii. 5, Ibn Ezra disputes the existence of *diminutives* in Hebrew. He says —

R. Adonim ben Temim, the Babylonian (who flourished at the end of the 10th century), whose soul is in Paradise, maintains that מְבִינָה is an epithet for the human spirit; and he thus analyses it — מְבִינָה is *adjective mas.* and מְבִינָה the *fem.*; and if thou wastest to make it *diminutive*, it will be מְבִינָה, the proper names מְבִינָה, *Aminon* (2 Sam. xiii. 20), and גַּשְׁמוּ, *Gashmu* (Nehem. vi. 6), he says are also diminutives. But this is poor grammar, since there is no word in Hebrew which can be made into a diminutive; and if the genius of the Hebrew languages had admitted of making diminutives, we should have found hundreds and thousands of them in the Scriptures. Now מְבִינָה, *Amnon*, and מְבִינָה, *Aminon*, are two names of the same individual, just as שְׁלֹמֹה, *Shelomo*, and שְׁלֹמֹן, *Shalmon*, אֲבִשָׁי, *Abishai*, and אֲבִינֵר, *Abner*, and אֲבִינֵר, *Abiner*. As for the ו in גַּשְׁמוּ, *Gashmu*, it is redundant, as in יֶתְרוֹ, *i. q.*, יֶתֶר, *Jether*.²

Ewald, who sneers at the Rabbins of the middle ages, will be surprised to find his theory about מְבִינָה (Hebrew Grammar,

¹ ומנן עשרה בעבור היווה סך חשבון והוא ראש הכל כי כל מה שיש למעלה ממנו הם אחרים בעבור היות עיקר כל דבר הראש ואמצעיתו וסופו היה הא' וכל בלשון הקדש בחזרה הא' יור בסוף ה' ה' ה' ה' ה' ה' אמצעיים ואלה הארבעה אותיות הם למשך ולא יתכן שימצא אות או תנועה ק' שיהיה אחר מהם במשך עמו

² אמר ר' אדוני בן חמי' המורחז נ"ע כי אבינוה כינוי לרחל בני האדם וכן דקדוקו אבין תואר השם לומר ואבינוה לשון נקבה ואם חצצרינה חזיה אבינוה וכן מלת אמינוה וגשמוה אומר והו דקדוק עניות כי אן בלשון הקדש מלה שהקשינו כלל ואילו היה זה ביסוד הלשון להקשין יהיו נמצאים במקרא למאות ולאלף ואולם אמנן ואמינוה שני שמות לאיש אחד כמו שלמה ושלמון אבשי ואבשי אבנר ואבנר וחוסם י' ו' גשמו כמו יתר יתר

§ 167), propounded by a Rabbi of the tenth century, and so ably opposed by another Rabbi of the twelfth century.

1100.—From the constant remarks of Ibn Ezra, — *some say* (יש אומרים, ii. 12; iii. 1. 18; iv. 12. 17; v. 19; ix. 17; x. 4, al.), *some interpret it* (יש מפרשים, iii. 11; iv. 19; v. 1. 2. 5; vii. 1. 19; viii. 5. 8. 10; x. 1, al.), *most interpreters* (רוב המפרשים, iv. 17; x. 6, 9), *one of the interpreters says* (אחד מן המפרשים, ii. 16; x. 17), &c., — it is evident that numerous commentaries, which are now lost, have been written on this book in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. Would that we at least had a history of the various views which those forgotten commentators entertained concerning *Cohleth*! It would no doubt have formed a curious and valuable addition to the literature of Biblical interpretation. However, one of these views is preserved by Ibn Ezra, who tells us in his commentary, chap. vii. 3, that¹ —

In consequence of the difficulties and apparent contradictions of this book, as, for instance —

| In one place he says— | | In another he says the reverse— | |
|---|----------|---|---------|
| Anger is better than laughter | vii. 3 | Anger rests in the bosom of fools | vii. 9 |
| In much wisdom is much anger | i. 18 | Remove anger from thy heart | xi. 10 |
| It is good and comely to eat and drink | v. 17 | It is good to go to the house of mourning | vii. 2 |
| I praised mirth | viii. 15 | To mirth I said, What avails she? | ii. 2 |
| What advantage has the wise man over the fool? | vi. 8 | There is an advantage to wisdom over folly | ii. 13 |
| I praised the dead | iv. 2 | A living dog is better than a dead lion | ix. 4 |
| There is no work, nor ac- count, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave | ix. 10 | There is an appointed time for every thing there . . . | iii. 17 |

¹ שראו בדבר שלמה בספר הזה דברים קשים מהם שיאמר במקומות רבים דבר ויאמר הדבר ובעבור זה אמרו חכמי ישראל ו' בקשו חכמים לנגח ספרקולת מפני דבריו סותרין זה את זה אמר מובן כעס משחוק והספק זה כי כעס בזה כפלים יגור וכן כי גרוב חכמה רוב כעס והספק זה והספק כעס מלבי וכן מובן אשר יזה לאכול ולשתות והספק זה מובן ללכת אל בית האבל וכן ושבדתי אני את השמחה והספק זה ולשמ' מה זה עושה וכן כי מה יתיר לחכם מן הכסל והספק שיש יחרון לחכמה וכן ושבח אני את החכמים והספק זה כי לכלב זה הוא מובן כי האריזה המה וכי כי אין מעשה וחשבון דעת החכמה בשאל והספק

In one place he says —

It shall not be well with the wicked, and he shall not prolong his days vii. 13
It shall be well with those who fear God viii. 12

In another place the reverse —

There is a wicked man who prolongs his days in his wickedness vii. 15
There are wicked to whom it happens according to the doings of the righteous . . viii. 14

And many more like these will be found by an attentive reader, for which, as the wise men of Israel of blessed memory tell us, the sages wanted to make this book apocryphal, though it is well known that the least among the wise will not write a book and contradict himself in it. WHEREFORE, ONE OF THE COMMENTATORS EXPLAINED *Cohleth* (קְהֵלֶת) BY ASSEMBLY, AND MAINTAINED THAT THIS BOOK WAS COMPOSED BY THE DISCIPLES OF SOLOMON, AND CONTAINS THE DIFFERENT OPINIONS OF EACH OF THEM. But this opinion is utterly inadmissible, because the words "*Cohleth was a wise man*" (xii. 9), shew that it refers to a single individual. So also "*Cohleth was desirous to find acceptable words*" (xii. 10), and especially "*I, Cohleth, was king*" (i. 12), are most conclusively against it.

It will be seen, from this view of *Cohleth*, that as literal and grammatical interpretation progressed, the sceptical passages in this book, which were so easily converted into orthodoxy by the allegorisers of former days, became more and more perplexing.

1135–1204.—The great philosophers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, who created a new epoch in Jewish literature, now began to grapple with these hard sayings of *Cohleth*, which they occasionally quote and explain in their respective works. Thus Maimonides,¹ in his *More Nebachim*, ii. 28,

כי עת לכל חסן וכן ושוב לא יהיה לרשע ולא יאריך ימים והספק יש רשע מאריך ברעו וכן אשר יהיה מובן ליראי האלהים והספק יש רשעים שמגיע אליהם כמעשה הצדיקים והמחשש היסב ימצא עוד כאלה בספר הזה וידוע כי הקל שבחכמים לא יחבר ספר ויחזיר דבריו בספרו והוצרך אחד מן המפרשים לרשע מלה קהלת כמו קהלת יעקב ואמר כי תלמידיו חבדו הספר וכל אחד אמר כפי מחשבתו וזה אינו נכון כלל בעבור ויותר שהיה קהלת הכם והנה הוא אחד ועוד בקש קהלת למצא דבר חסן וחריזה חכמורה אני קהלת הייתי מלך

¹ Maimonides, or Rambam, רמב"ם, as he is also called, from the initials of Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, was born on the 30th of March, 1135,

defends Solomon from the heretical opinion, as deduced from Coheleth, i. 4, *that this world has existed from all eternity*. As the Rev. Theodore Preston, who gives this part of Maimonides' work,¹ has so woefully mistranslated it, we have been obliged to make a new translation, which is given in Appendix III., together with his version and the Hebrew.

1142. — Nathaniel, called in Arabic Abul-Barcat Hibat Allah b. Malka, who was the medical Coryphæus of the Mahommedan dominions in the twelfth century, as well as a distinguished philosopher and Hebraist, and who was designated "the only one of his time," *Wachid-al Zeman*, because of his extraordinary services, now tried his skill on this difficult book. His commentary, which is written in Arabic, has never been published, but the MS. is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Isaac Ibn Ezra, son of the immortal commentator, celebrated Abul-Barcat's commentary on Coheleth in a poem, in which he declares that this Solomonic book will henceforth (1143 A. D.) go by the name of him who has so successfully unlocked its meaning.² Some idea, however, may be formed of the merits of this commentary from the following specimen, quoted by the learned Pocock in his *Notæ Miscellanæ ad Portam Mosis*:³ —

פֶּקַל מִיּוֹדֵעַ וְגו' עַל רֶסֶם אֱלֹהִים פֶּקַל אֵן כֵּן הוּא עֲרֹךְ כִּחְזָקָה וְחַד
בְּנֵי הָאָדָם עוֹלָה לְמַעַלָּה וְאֵנָּה כִּחְזָקָה עֵד אֱלֹהִים אֵל יוֹם אֲנֹשֶׁר פִּירְדָּהּ אֵל יוֹם
רוּחַ הַבְּהֵמָה לֵים לֹחַם רִנְיָהּ בִּלְהִי נִאֻלָּה אֵל סֶלֶל אֲלֵיָּהּ מִלֵּל אֱלֹהִים אֵלֵי יִחְלָשֶׁה וְיִצְמַח פֶּאֶרָה
עִלֵּם דִּלְךָ וְחִזְקָהּ פִּיבָה עֵלֵיָּהּ אֵן לֹא יִקָּם נִפְסָה כְּאֵלֵּהֶם וְיִרְכַּב שְׂהוּרָה וְהוּא יַעֲלֶם אֵן אֱלֹהֵי שְׂאֵלָה
Dixit, Quis noit, &c., viâ increpationis et aversationis ipsorum, quasi diceret,
Quisquis noverit, ac pro certo habuerit, Spiritum hominum ascendere sursum,
ac servari ipsum apud Creatorem usque ad diem resurrectionis, qui tum in

in Cordova, and died 13th December, 1204. An instructive sketch of the life and labours of this most illustrious philosopher is given by Jost, in Herzog's Real-Encyclopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche, vol. viii., p. 601-607; Graetz, Geschichte der Juden vi., p. 310.

¹ The Hebrew Text, and a Latin version of the Book of Solomon called Ecclesiastes; with original Notes, philological and exegetical. London, 1845. p. 18.

² Comp. Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Jahrgang, 1859, p. 711; Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, vi., p. 303.

³ The theological works of Dr. Pocock, London, 1740, vol. i. p. 196.

corpus suum ipsum remittat, spiritum autem jumentum non iterum reverti, sed descendere in imum terræ instar corporis quod tabescit et dissolvitur; hæc cum certò noverit, oportet illum non se jumentorum more gerere, et cupiditatibus suis indulgere, cum sciat Deum de ipso rationem sumpturum.

1270. — The celebrated Zohar, or the Talmud of the Kabbala, as it is aptly called, which, as is now critically certain, was compiled in the second half of the thirteenth century,¹ also refers to the hard sayings and apparent contradictions of Coheleth, and attempts to overcome the difficulty by resorting to the hypothesis, *that Solomon quotes the language of ignorant unbelievers to expose their folly*. Chap. iii. 19, is thus commented upon: —

Solomon did not say this for himself, as the other words, but he repeats here the words of the worldly fool, who says so. And what do they say? That "the destiny of man and the destiny of beasts," &c. They are fools, because they know not, nor do they enquire into wisdom; they say that this world goes on by chance, and the Holy One, blessed be He, takes no cognisance of it; but that "the destiny of man and the destiny of the beast is the same, and the same destiny happens to all." And as Solomon knew these fools who spoke in this manner, he called them beasts, for they degraded themselves into mere beasts by uttering such sentiments.²

This attempt to explain away the obnoxious passages, is substantially the same as the one mentioned by Ibn Ezra (*vide*

¹ For the development of the Zohar see Jost, Geschichte des Judenthums, &c., vol. iii., p. 74-81. Preston's remark on Mendelssohn's Introduction (p. 76), that "the Zohar is a most ancient Jewish commentary on the Pentateuch," is a mere repetition of an impudent assertion of the Kabbalists, who palmed it upon *Simeon ben Jochai*, which is now entirely exploded. Compare also Steinschneider's very able work on Jewish Literature, London, Longman, &c., 1857, p. 11,1 &c.; and Die Religionsphilosophie des Sohar und ihr Verhältniss zur allgemeinen jüdischen Theologie, von D. H. Joël, Leipzig, 1849.

² לא אמר שלמה חזי קרא מנרמי' כשאר אינן מלין אלא אהרן אינן מלין דרשנא דלמא דאמרין כך ודאי אמרי כי מקרה האדם ומקרה הבהמה וכו' ששנא דלא ידעין ולא מסתכלין בחכמתא אמרי דהאי עולם אויל במקרה וקב"ה לא אשנה עליהו אלא מקרה האדם ומקרה הבהמה ומקרה אהרן וכו' ובר שלמה מסתכל באינן ששנא דקארי דא קרי להון בהמה דאינן עבדי נרמיהו בהמה ממש בגין דאמרין מלין אלא This passage is quoted by Mendelssohn in his very elaborate Introduction to his Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes. The biblical student will find a great mass of valuable information in this Introduction, which has been translated by Preston in the work quoted in Note 2 of the preceding page, and in the foregoing note in this page.

upra, p. 57), only that there the heretical sentiments are ascribed to the different disciples of Solomon, whereas here they are put into the mouth of unbelievers generally.

To the period of the Zohar we must ascribe the Midrash Themurah, which is based upon Coheleth. The design of this Midrash is to shew that all the opposites which exist upon this earth, e. g., riches and poverty, beauty and deformity, &c., contribute to the harmony of the whole, and speak of the wisdom of the Creator; and they must respectively be received with thankfulness and resignation. To enforce this lesson, the Midrash especially expatiates upon chap. iii. 1-8, in connection with Ps. cxxxvi.¹

1280-1350. — Joseph Ibn Caspi, a celebrated expositor and philosopher, who flourished in the beginning of the fourteenth century, wrote a commentary on this book, propounding, according to his own assertion, quite a new theory of its import. He maintains that the design of Coheleth is to teach man that his occupations with the affairs of this world are to be as little as possible, since they are all vain, and that he is to give himself up to the study of the law and science. This Coheleth sets forth in twenty-one arguments, which are first treated according to the ten דבליים in connection with the passages of Scripture, and then according to their logical sequence. Whereupon he gives some hints on the perfection of the soul, and on prophecy, as connected with the active mind, and quotes ten verses from this book, which, according to him, recommend the Aristotelian medium between the two extremes. Caspi wrote this commentary when he was fifty years old, and called it *The Seal of Life*; it has never been printed, but the MS. is at Oxford. Our notice of it is taken from Steinschneider's very elaborate and excellent article on Joseph Caspi, in Ersch and Gruber's Encyclopedia, the remarks of which on this commentary we

¹ This Midrash is comprised in the collection of small Midrashim edited by Jellinek, to which reference has already been made, p. 38, note i.

subjoin in the foot-note.¹ Ibn Caspi's extremely scarce commentary on the Song of Songs we published in our "Introduction to the Song of Songs," pp. 47-49, where the reader will find the theory of active and passive mind largely developed.

1298-1370. — Though the celebrated *Bechinoth Olam* (Trial of the World), does not profess to be an exposition of our book, yet there can be no doubt that the design of its author was to propound, in a popular and attractive style, the doctrine of Coheleth. Jedajah Penini, the Jewish Cicero, as he is called by Christians, like Coheleth, shews, in the most striking manner, the utter vanity of all earthly pursuits and pleasures, apart from a future life and judgment. Like Coheleth, he finishes his introductory part — which forms the basis of the succeeding contemplations — with the appalling fact that man is a prey to death; whereupon he shews the unsatisfactory nature and vanity of all human pursuits, and then, like Coheleth, concludes with setting before man the fear of God and a future world. A few specimens will shew the resemblance of the *Bechinoth Olam* to Coheleth. After describing the transcendent powers of the human mind, and the heavenly endowments of man (§ 1), and yet the evil to

¹ Der Commentar zu Kohelet befindet sich in Parma und in Oxford. Im Epigraph rühmt Josef von sich vom Knaben-bis zum Greisenalter (Ps. xxxvii. 25) Bücher verfaßt zu haben, im Alter von 60 Jahren diesen Commentar, dessen Text die Aufgabe des Menschen dahin bestimme, die Beschäftigung mit den Angelegenheiten dieser Welt, da sie eitel seien, auf ein Minimum zu beschränken, und sich dem Studium des Gesetzes und der Wissenschaft hinzugeben, was Kohelet durch 21 Beweise dargethan habe. Er nennt diesen Commentar ein Siegel des Lebens (סֵתֶר חַיִּים) für alle seine Sorgen und Gedanken. Die angebliehen 21 Beweise Salomon's werden Zusammenhänge der Bibelstellen nach den 10 דבליים ausgeführt, dann in logischer Ordnung kurz zusammengefaßt. In dieser allgemeinen Erläuterung behauptet er etwas Neues geleistet zu haben, und specielle, bereits vor ihm gegebene Erklärungen übergehen zu dürfen. Nach diesem gewissermaßen polemischen Theile fügt er einige Andeutungen über Vollkommenheit der Seele, Prophetie mit Rücksicht auf die "active Intelligenz" bei, führt zehn Verse aus Kohelet an, welche die (Aristotelische) Mitte zwischen den Extremen empfehlen. Auf diesen "Commentar Kohelet's" verweist Johanan Alemanno in der Einleitung zu seinem Commentar über das Hohelied. Ersch und Gruber, Allgemeine Encyclopädie, Zweite Section, vol. xxi, p. 64.

which this highly gifted man is exposed (§ 2), Jedajah says, in § 3 —

For a man of such capacities I am filled with sorrow and grief; this Saphir masterpiece is exposed to chance and misfortune, like a target to the arrows; he is the object of disgrace and contempt, like the lower brutes; he is weighed down with oppression and contumely, from his youth to his hoary age. He who ought to sit in the counsels of wisdom, pines away in solitude; he who is like a son of God, is doomed to silence. The shepherd of truth must feed upon the wind; the bearer of wisdom and morality must succumb under his burden. Wisdom denies help to him who trusted to his intelligence for deliverance; the hands are weakened of him who holds fast to his integrity; or if calamities befall man, he dies and is no more, as the brute of the field and the beast of the forest; the sacred temple is mixed up with clods, and thrown down under trees; the body formed by compass of God, is consigned by God to rest in darkness. This contemplation heavily afflicts me, and I cannot be comforted. The masterwork of God loathsome disappears, and is no more! Cedars planted by God's own hand are felled down! I studied man, I carefully examined his nature, and I found no imperfection in him, except that he is a prey to death.

This is also the burden of the prologue in *Cohemoth*, and in both forms the basis of the argument. Having shewn that this is the deplorable condition of man, R. Jedajah, like *Cohemoth*, goes on to shew that no human effort can pacify the disturbed mind, apart from the fear of God and the belief in a future existence; that it is the prospect of travelling on to a life beyond the grave, which reconciles us to the afflictions we have to pass through on our way to it. Imitating *Cohemoth*, Jedajah therefore counsels us, towards the end of his treatise —

Remember thy Creator, who has entrusted thee with a noble soul! thou hast taken her in as a stranger upon this earth; thou givest her shelter as a guest. As long, therefore, as she sojourns in thy dark abode, she looks to the place whence she came; she thinks in her low estate of her former glory, how she stood high in the holy place, and mourns! Pity her, and speak comfortably to her, for none but thou canst save her. As long as she is with thee, she is like a bird caught and imprisoned by a careless child; she sees many birds freely fly over her, right and left, about their nests, but has no power to overcome the youth who holds her; and she is afflicted. If thou dost not wish to lay violent hands on this thy trust, cultivate and guard her. Why stir up evil? why lose thyself in a maze of devices, and

thus multiply thy wearisome labour and toil? Thou knowest how immense is the work of cultivating the soul, and how short are the days of our life to do it; and had we to live a thousand years twice told, it would be too short, for the desired object is far off; but the days of our sojourn here are few and evil, and do not suffice to accomplish even little things. Attend, therefore, my ears, I will teach you help; see, my heart, see that thou forsake the besotting things of time; enjoy from earthly things as much as is necessary for the sustenance of life, which cannot be neglected without suffering; take of the best fruits of the land, of its spices for the preservation of thy health, of its sweetness for thy enjoyment; but shun all excess, let that be for the beasts of the field, and the men who are like them; leave consuming pleasures, and ants' treasures, that vanish like a dream, the interpretation of which is, "the body will soon decay before its time, and the spirit goes down like the spirit of the beast after death." My heart, may this be the dream of thy persecutors, and its interpretation for thy enemies! Take my counsel, whilst thy branches are still green, whilst thy sun is not clouded, and thou art young and cheerful, and hast strength to run the race with the swiftness of the hart, to obtain the prize, and to rouse others from their lethargy and earthly pleasures by thy sweet savour, and by the brightness of thy light. Why, then, sleepest thou? why delay to tear off the delusive mask, and escape from infatuations? Arise, invoke wisdom, before the days of evil come, before the many infirmities of old age draw nigh, and strength is changed into weakness, and hope into despair.

We need hardly remind the reader of the relationship which this paragraph sustains to the twelfth chapter of *Cohemoth*. It will be seen that Jedajah, like the sacred writer, whilst setting before us the bright prospect of the life to come, also recommends the cheerful but moderate enjoyment of the blessings of the life that now is. This imitation is still more striking when we compare the concluding remarks of the two books. *Cohemoth*, towards the end, praises "the words of the wise," and admonishes that all heed should be paid to them (xii. 11, 12). Jedajah finishes by urging that all attention be given to the thirteen articles of belief written by Maimonides, who was greatly attacked in those days —

Finally, turn neither to the left nor right from all that the wise men have believed, the chief of whom was the distinguished teacher *Rambam*, of blessed memory, with whom no one can be compared from among all the wise men of Israel who lived since the conclusion of the Talmud; then I

shall be sure that thou, enriched with all the knowledge of religion and philosophy, wilt fear the Lord thy God.

The *Bechinoth Olam* has always occupied a very high position among the Jews, and has been a source of comfort to many, who looked upon Coheleth as a sealed book.¹

1399. — The Nitzachon of R. Jomtov Lipmann Mühlhausen has also taken up some of the hard sayings of Coheleth. This Nitzachon, or *Victory*, is a polemical work against Christianity, written in Cracow about 1399, according to a MS. note. It consists of seven parts, according to the seven days of the week, and three hundred and fifty-four sections, ten of which are devoted to what the author regards the most difficult passages of Coheleth. The following are the first three sections: —

§ 311. Chap. i. 1, 2, *Vanity of vanities, &c.* — Forbid it that such a thought should ever enter into the heart, that the works of the blessed God in the creation of the world are vanity! for he has created all things for his glory (comp. my Comment. § 3). The meaning is, that all the labour wherewith one labours to acquire and enjoy the things which are under the sun is utterly vain and profitless; all the exertions which man makes in this world which is under the rotation of the sun, for his aggrandisement, gratification, and enjoyment, and which are not for the glory of God. The "under the sun" is mentioned, because most of the pursuits of man in this lower world consist in growing fruit and other things which depend upon the sun; whereas, all the work ought to be for the glory of God, who is above the sun. Comp. § 68. And thus King Solomon, peace be upon him, concludes this book by saying, "Finally, all is heard, fear God and keep his commandments, for for this all is man" (xii. 13), i. e., for this was man created. And in this sense the Rabbins, of blessed memory, have explained it, viz., Man has no advantage from that wherein he labours under the sun, but he has an advantage from his labours in the law which is before the sun.

§ 312. iii. 19, *For the destiny of man, &c.* — Let not thy heart lead thee astray to think that Coheleth speaks here of the soul, since he says himself that "the spirit shall return to God" (xii. 7), see § 120. Now, the end of this verse shews his meaning, where he says, "As the one dies, so dies the other," i. e., it is with regard to the dying of the animal's spirit that he says

¹ A sketch of R. Jedajah's life will be found in Stern's beautiful edition of the *Bechinoth Olam*, Wien, 1847. See also Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Sekten*, vol. iii., p. 28, &c.

all have the same spirit," for this spirit does die, since it is of the wind which is upon the waters (comp. § 1); but of the upper spirit which returns to God it is impossible to say so, for this continues to live, as I shall shew in § 320.

§ 313, *And the advantage of man, &c.* — I have already explained, in § 312, that the spirit returns to God, and that it has an essential and great advantage. The advantage, therefore, which is here denied, refers to that which is earthly and carnal, for the word *אדם*, *man*, is derived from *אדמה*, *earth*, and it is for this reason that Coheleth does not here use the word *אדם*, *man*, as I explained in § 5. And the meaning is, that as regards the body, there is no advantage in it over the body of the beast, for all came from the earth and return to the earth again; but as regards the intellect, there is an advantage in it. Comp. §§ 76 and 312.

20. *Who knows, &c.* — *מי ידע* means he who is worthy to know. Comp. Joel ii. 14, i. e., he who is worthy, let him take these words to heart, that the spirit of man goes up, for this is its nature (comp. my Comment. § 76), and must give an account; and the spirit of the beast goes naturally down, for the spirit of the beast is from the elements, from the wind which blows upon the earth, and has no reward or punishment.¹

R. Lipmann has been quite as successful in refuting Christianity, as he has here shewn himself to be in removing the difficulties from Coheleth. In justice, however, to this Rabbi, it must be said that he always makes a distinction in his polemics between Christianity and Christians; and whilst he attacks the former, he endeavours to prove, from Isa. lxvi. 23 and the concluding words of Psalm cxlv., that all conscientious and pious non-Israelites will be saved.² When we bear in mind the state of Christianity in his days, the bitter sufferings which were then inflicted upon the Jews in the name of Christ, and the awful curses pronounced by the heads of the Church against all those who were out of its pale, instead of being surprised that R. Lipmann wrote against such a system, we wonder at his charity.

¹ Liber Nizachon Rabbi Lipmanni, &c., curant. Theod. Hackspan, Norinberg, 1644.

² Comp. *גם צדיק ואימות העולם יש להם חלק לעולם הבא*: וכתב רמ"ם גוי המקיים שבע מצוות *גוי נח מסבירה לבו מע"ס אינ' נקרא מצדיק ואימות העולם* *ויבדל כל בשר שם קדשו לעולם ועד אין זה מורה לקיום העולם אלא מורה על נשמת צדיק ואימות העולם שהמה בכלל כל בשר* See also § 333, 285.

1490. — It is difficult to gather from the *Michlal Yophi* (Perfection of Beauty) what the author took the design of this book to be. As far as it can be stated with any definiteness, it seems to be that *Solomon examined in this book the various conflicting opinions which he gathered together (hence the name קְהֵלֶת) respecting the affairs of this world, and the destiny of man, and came to the conclusion that the best thing for man is to fear God, and to remember that there is a future judgment.*¹

The Biblical student will always feel grateful to R. Solomon ben Melech for this very useful manual, which is a compilation of grammatical and critical notes on the whole Old Testament from the best Jewish commentators, such as Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Kimchi, &c.

1475–1530. — So numerous and conflicting were the opinions about this book in the fifteenth century, that R. Isaac Aramah, who was desirous of making himself master of the subject, was perfectly astonished to find that both the ancient and more modern commentators were so greatly divided. *Some forcing upon it a strange and far-fetched literal sense; others, a philosophical meaning, too mysterious and profound to be understood; and others, again, interpreting it according to the Midrash, find in it laws and statutes full of piety. The point in which all of them have erred alike is, that they alter the sense of the book into palatable sentiment; and yet not one of them has put such sense into it as to be able to boast, with reason, that they have drawn from this rock wholesome food, or elicited sweetness from this flint (i.e., from this difficult book).* Rejecting, therefore, all these different views, R. Aramah came to the conclusion, *that every statement in this book is perfectly plain and consistent with orthodoxy, that it contains the sublimest of all contemplations, and teaches the highest order of heavenly wisdom.* Rabbi A. was therefore amazed how it could ever enter into the minds of commentators to think that the sages, of blessed memory, wanted to put such a book among the apocrypha, and that the only reason

¹ ספר מכלל יופי with the שו"ת of Abendana, Amsterdam, 1601, p. 47.

why they left it in the canon was, that *the first and last words* of it were consistent with the law.

"Now, it was not because thinking men found it difficult to discover the good sense of it that the sages wanted to hide this book, but for fear of the multitude, who waste the riches of the law. But as it is the habit of these ignorant people to look merely at the beginning and the end of a book, and these portions unmistakeably contain the fear of God, therefore the wise men at last determined not to hide it from these people."

Such, then, is the forced interpretation which this Rabbi gives of the plain words of the sages, entirely ignoring what they distinctly say, that "the book contains sentiments tending to infidelity;" that "it utters Solomon's own wisdom," &c. (*vide supra*, pp. 14–16). Yet Aramah exclaims against the far-fetched explanations of others.

1548. — As grammatical exegesis was comparatively little pursued in the sixteenth century, the difficulties of *Cohleth* occasioned no trouble, and the book was regarded by its commentators as surpassing all other books of Scripture in heavenly lessons. Thus Elisha Galicho, or Galiko, who flourished in the second half of the sixteenth century,¹ tells us, in the preface to his commentary on *Cohleth* —

Since all the pursuits of this world and its lusts cling to the creature in consequence of his earthliness and desire, and the soul of man covets these things, and is in danger of being inextricably ensnared by them, many lessons are given in the Law, Prophets, and Hagiographa, to point out the way to the tree of life. Hence both the earlier and latter sages carefully composed encouragement and admonitions, parables and proverbs, to teach man wisdom by moral sayings, the fear of God, and the fear of sin, making hedges and fences for the benefit of the multitude. And Solomon excelled all in his moral Proverbs, which are as numerous as the advantages which accrue to man when he inclines his ears to them. Now, to surpass even these, he wrote *Cohleth*, the whole of which, from beginning to end, is perpetually turning round the same point, and that is, to expose the

¹ The first edition of this Commentary, said to have been published in Venice, 1548, is extremely scarce. I have never seen it; the one I possess was published in Venice, 1578, 4to, Giov. di Gara.

vanity of all earthly pursuits, and to teach man to know that his happiness is no happiness at all, and that his wishes and desires are vain and delusive, and will not bear examination; that the great object of life in this world is to attain to the perfection of the soul, and its immortality; to acquire that light which will shine in the light of the countenance of the Eternal King in the world to come. This is the design of this holy book, which is a guide whereunto all must look.

Having thus given the design of the book, R. Galicho divides it into *twenty-seven* sections, according to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, including the five final letters, and gives a minute analysis of the contents of each section.

The first section (chap. i. 1-11) speaks in general terms of the affairs of this world, and of the dignity of the human soul, shewing that it is in the nature of the soul to cling to things which tend to its perfection.

The second section (chap. i. 12 - ii. 11) speaks more particularly of the pursuits of this world, such as wisdom, pleasure, mirth, riches, covetousness, &c., and sets forth their respective dangers.

The third section (chap. ii. 12-24) gives the distinction between wisdom and folly, shewing that man ought to despise the pursuit after mammon, and lay hold of that which will elevate the soul.

The fourth section (chap. iii. 1-9) speaks of the allotted times of adversity and prosperity, being intimately connected with what precedes, thereby shewing either that Israel is not subjected to chance, or that we are not to relinquish our hope, when in adverse circumstances, for the coming of better days, or that there is certainty in times or seasons, or that an apparently bad time may really be good, and *vice versa*.

The fifth section (chap. iii. 10-17) speaks of the design and use of our afflictions; of the fact that the righteous sometimes suffer, whilst the wicked prosper; and shews why man is created in a state of depravity, and what human nature was before its fall.

The sixth section (chap. iii. 18-22) refutes the opinion of the

wicked respecting their prosperity and the sufferings of the righteous, as well as the opinion of those who believe that the world is under chance, and not Providence, and deny the immortality of the soul; and then dwells upon the happiness of the soul in a future state.

The seventh section (chap. iv. 1-8) takes up again the existence of Providence; the good of sufferings, which are sent to awaken to repentance, to make one active who has the power of diminishing crime, but does not exercise it in consequence of being unscrupulously engrossed in the affairs of this life out of jealousy; speaks of those who, despite all sufferings, continue in sin; of a pious and God-serving man, but withal not too self-confident, whose example ought to be imitated, yet is shunned and despised; of the punishment of him who refuses to get married, and dies without issue; of the evil of sin, and the advantage of holiness; and of the responsibility of man to choose the service of God.

The eighth section (chap. iv. 9-16) praises the connection with the pious as helping one in the service of God; blames those who associate with the impious, and speaks of the union of the good disposition with the soul.

The ninth section (chap. iv. 17 - v. 7) enters minutely into the subject of divine worship, viz., prayer, and its necessary concomitants, almsgiving and vows, setting forth the evil consequences of violating these; it speaks of the necessity of departing from evil, which is the essential cleansing of ourselves and preparation to enter the house of God, the world of spirits; of the strict performance of vows, and of shunning pleasure.

The tenth section (chap. v. 8-19) continues to speak of the advantage of benevolence and almsgiving, even in rendering wealth more durable, thus shewing the folly of acquiring money, and not contributing to the cause of God, and the evils to which unhallowed riches will lead, and the necessity of working for that which elevates the soul; and then passes on to the fact that some benevolent and almsgiving men lose their fortunes, whilst

misers and lewd men multiply their wealth; or it may be that the particulars still speak of the purifying of the body and soul for going into the house of God, which is the land of Israel, and not to run after the pleasures of riches, as purification is a blessing to the man who practises it, and to his issue, and in the hour of death; mammon, however, is the ruin of a man both here and hereafter.

The eleventh section (chap. vi. 1-6) speaks of the blindness of the worldly men who, notwithstanding all the indications that their prosperity is not a matter of chance, but from Providence, wantonly squander the bounties of God, as if their own strength had acquired them; thus neither enjoying these gifts themselves, nor devoting them to the glory of God — better an untimely birth than such men.

The twelfth section (chap. vi. 7-12) speaks of the infatuation of the worldly rich, who do not see that the study of the law surpasses all, and that there is no advantage to a wise man above a fool, except that he investigate things, to be confirmed in the service of God; shews that, by possessing knowledge, one who has been an old sinner may yet amend his ways; and then goes on to vindicate the creation of passions, &c. Or it may speak of the many warnings man requires to abstain from carnal pleasures, &c.; of what the penitent must undergo, and of the superiority of a penitent over a righteous man, since the former has not only to labour for the future, but also to amend the past.

The thirteenth section (chap. vii. 1-12) speaks of the superiority of the enjoyment of the soul in the world of spirits, to bodily happiness in this world; of the excellency of a good name, which is to be acquired by remembering the day of death, by visiting the houses of mourners, by listening to the corrections of teachers, by hating evil inclinations, by listening to the teaching of the law and refusing to hear the mockery of fools, and not to despair of getting a good name even in old age. There are, however, other means whereby to get a good name, viz., to consider the end of a thing from the beginning; to be

cheerful under sufferings, and not murmur against God; to help the needy; not to trust to one's-self, but to be watchful over one's besetting sins, and to study the word of God.

The fourteenth section (chap. vii. 13-24) mentions things which, when observed, will prevent a man losing his good name, namely, keeping of God's wonderful works constantly before his eyes; not to be over wise so as to attempt to take away from or add to the word of God; to examine his conduct daily, not to slip either in prosperity or adversity. Or it tells us to preach repentance in the days of calamity; to beware of a little knowledge; to add to theory practice, as each is beautiful in its season; not to be over wicked or over righteous in our own estimation; to set a good example; to be always occupied with the study of God, which will keep from the innumerable sins by which we are surrounded; and above all to be meek.

The fifteenth section (chap. vii. 25 - viii. 1) mentions the weapons wherewith we are to conquer the evil heart, viz., studying the word of God, wisdom, bearing in mind a future judgment, comparing a good with an evil act, and their respective consequences, not to have too much intercourse with women, whose cunning the wise alone can elude, &c., &c.

The sixteenth section (chap. viii. 2-10) advises to obey God rather than man, even at the peril of life, since the loss of it in the service of God here will secure us everlasting life hereafter; tells us that the tyrant who compels us to transgress the word of God will be severely punished in the world to come, cautions us not to judge the things which take place by their outward appearance, &c.

The seventeenth section (chap. viii. 11-15) speaks of the marvellous forbearance of God with the wicked, of the righteous sharing in the punishment of the wicked, and that they are joyfully to submit to sufferings or death.

The eighteenth section (viii. 16-ix. 3) speaks of the inscrutableness of God's dealings, of the folly of trying to find them out, of the wickedness of making God the author of evil, &c., &c.

The nineteenth section (chap. ix. 4-6) speaks of the power of sin, and of the still greater power of meekness; or shews that man must combine both his component parts, *i. e.*, matter and form, for the service of God, and the sinner may yet experience the power of repentance.

The twentieth section (chap. ix. 7-12) expatiates upon the penitent, declares that it is never too late to repent, and shews the reward reserved for those who repent, &c., &c.

The twenty-first section (chap. ix. 13-x. 4) speaks of the advantage of wisdom over strength, and of the infatuation of worldly men, who do not see this.

The twenty-second section (chap. x. 5-15) speaks of the fact that men prefer folly to wisdom, and though they discover their error, they will not leave it; advises men to enter deeply into the wisdom of the law, shews how to pursue it, cautions against yielding to the evil heart, &c., &c.

The twenty-third section (chap. x. 16-20) advises leaders of communities and kings to set a good example to those under them, not to indulge in pleasures which may lead them to commit violence and oppression, then God will withdraw his protection and blessing, &c., &c.

The twenty-fourth section (chap. xii. 8) recommends almsgiving, which, like good conduct, is a pillar of the world; or recommends kindness to those who are engaged in the study of the law, for though we may have no return for it here, we shall be blessed for it hereafter, &c.

The twenty-fifth section (chap. xi. 9-xii. 1) recommends that we should enlist in the service of God from early youth, or perhaps suggests that we should neither be dejected nor too buoyant, remembering that we shall be brought into judgment for all we do, &c., &c.

The twenty-sixth section (chap. xii. 2-7) describes the weakness of our bodily frame in old age, in consequence of which we are unable to do much good, hence the admonition to remember the Creator whilst we are young.

The twenty-seventh section (chap. xii. 8-14) repeats the assertion made in the beginning, namely, that all worldly pursuits are vanity; describes the wisdom of Coheleth, and the claim he has to our attention; and concludes by telling us that all depends upon fearing God and obeying his commandments.

We have given a copious extract of this analysis, if such it may be called, because Galicho is the first expositor who gives a summary of the contents of Coheleth. The commentary is chiefly allegorical, very extensive, and abounds in quotations from the Midrashim, and other Rabbinical writings.

1580. — Though we now find all commentators agreeing in the traditional view that Solomon wrote this book in his old age, when he repented, and was restored to God and his earthly kingdom, yet their opinions as to the design and plan of Coheleth are as divergent as ever. Every fresh commentator either actually or virtually regards all his predecessors as having misunderstood Coheleth. Accordingly, the distinguished Moses Alshech¹ submits that Solomon wrote this treatise *to teach that man has been sent into this world to gain the world to come.*

As one goes from a palace to the town, to trade in various articles, in order to bring good things to his house, to satisfy his soul from all the transactions he has made in the city whither he went, so that he may rejoice in the palace whence he came, as this is his home, and this the place where he rests from all his labours wherewith he laboured in the city to which he went; — but he who does not labour in the city, to gather good things, will return to his palace whence he came just as he left it, and, instead of pleasure, he will have sorrow and distress; — so will it be with every man of Israel who leaves the mansions of the upper world, the enjoyments and pleasures in the palace of the King of the Universe, and comes into the houses of clay of this world to engage in the law and commandments, that he may bring into the treasury of the Holy King, in the upper world, wherewith to satisfy his soul from his labours in this world. But if he

¹ Moses Alshech was born in Safet, Upper Galilee, about 1520. He was the pupil of the famous Jos. Karo, and made such astonishing progress in the acquisition of varied learning, that he became one of the most distinguished commentators of the sixteenth century, and occupied the office of chief Rabbi in his native place, where he died about 1595.

chooses his way in this world, to sit down, and not do anything in the law and commandments, and indulges in eating the fat and drinking the sweet things of this world, and throws the work of the law and the commandments behind his back, then an untimely birth is better than he. For the spirit shall return to God without any good, and full of after-growths of the miry clay, and scabs of sins and transgressions; and will have brought all this evil upon him by his own lusts. For the delusive good things of this world he gradually forsakes the Lord, till he despises the good and chooses the evil. Wherefore Solomon, in his great wisdom, here teaches man to know the vanity of earthly pursuits, so that the righteous may lay hold of the way of the Lord to perfect his heart, since there is nothing good but the service and fear of the Lord all the day. And this it is with which he concludes: "The end of the matter is, All is heard, fear God," &c., &c.¹

As it is to be expected from this celebrated Rabbi and preacher, his commentary contains many beautiful thoughts and attractive parables, which might be serviceable to homilists, but does not contribute much to the exegesis of the book.

1631. — Far less interesting, but much more recondite, than Alshech, is the commentary of El. Loanz,² who, like Solomon, according to tradition, betook himself in his old age to write upon the vanity of all earthly things. "*When Solomon began in his latter days,*" says this Kabbalist, "*to learn Mishna Thorah, he found it his duty to speak publicly to the people words of wisdom and instruction.*"

This Baal-Shem also grapples with the difficulties and hard sayings of Coheleth, and the manner in which he attempts to explain them does no credit to the Kabbalah, of which he had such a wonderful knowledge, as will be seen from the following specimen of the introduction to his commentary: —

As to the words, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth," &c. (xi. 9), we find in the Midrash Rabba that R. Samuel, the son of Isaac, says that the wise men wanted to hide Coheleth, because there are in it sentiments which lean to infidelity; they said that it contains Solomon's own wisdom,

¹ Commentary on the Five Megilloth, Offenbach, 1721, p. 48, &c.

² Eliah Loanz, also called Baal-Shem (the renowned or wonder-working man), from his marvellous knowledge of the Kabbala and El. Ashkenasi, was born in Frankfort-on-the-Maine about 1550, and died in Worms, 1636.

because he uttered the above words. Moses said, "Ye shall not follow the ways of your hearts," &c. (Numb. xv. 39), and Solomon says, "Walk in the ways of thy heart" (xi. 9), doing away, as it were, with judge and judgment; but when he said, "for all this, God will bring thee into judgment (*Ibid.*), they said that "Solomon, honour be upon him, said well." Now, this proceeding is a matter of great astonishment to every intelligent man; 1. How could our sages, of blessed memory, pass judgment upon the beginning of the verse, without at once seeing the orthodox end of it, and thus try to hide the book; especially as we so frequently find the saying in the writings of our Rabbins, of blessed memory, "Fool! always look to the end of a sentence!" 2. Why were our sages going to contradict themselves? Have they not already declared (Perek Hasholeach, p. 45), in the name of R. Nachman — and there was no difference of opinion about this — that a scroll of the law copied by an infidel must be burned? and has not Yoreh Deah (§ 281) explained this declaration, "Even if there is no flaw or mistake in such a copy, it must be burnt, from the very fact that an infidel made it?" yet this book, which tends to infidelity, the sages wanted to hide, when they, according to their own teaching, ought to have burnt it. 3. If the beginning of the verse is heresy, how can the end be so orthodox as to merit the approbation, "Solomon has said well," &c.? 4. The passage begins with, "Rejoice, O young man," and against this they exclaim, "It is Solomon's own wisdom," as if this were the great difficulty in their eyes; when in fact the words, "and walk in the ways of thy heart," are the difficulty, inasmuch as they contradict the injunction of our Rabbi Moses, peace be upon him. 5. Why did they not say that Solomon also contradicts Moses in the following clause of the same verse? — Comp. "Walk in the sight of thine eyes" (xi. 9) with "and ye shall not walk after your eyes" (Numb. xv. 39). 6. Why were they going to conceal it? why had they not the courage to explain the difficulties as R. Hanah did, or R. Levi, which is recorded in the Talmud (Shabbath, 30, 2), *e.g.*, R. Hanah said, What is the meaning of "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, &c., &c. . . . God will bring thee into judgment"? The former, the evil spirit (הַיִּצָּר) in man, cries, the latter is the language of the good spirit (הַיָּשָׁר). R. Levi said, the former refers to the joy in the words of the law, the latter to good works; and Rashi, the great luminary of blessed memory, explains "Rejoice, O young man" in the study of the law, "and walk in the ways of thy heart," *i.e.*, understand, as far as thou canst see, what is in thy heart, what good works thou canst do; "and know that for all this," &c., *i.e.*, know that for all thou hast learned thou wilt be judged, if thou dost not keep it. 7. Why did they regard the first part of this verse as heretical, and not other passages, such as "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do," &c. (ix. 10) giving liberty to anything one likes, because "there is no work nor account in the grave" (*Ibid.*), thus doing away with all future judgment, and making the grave a place of refuge? I therefore wonder that they did not give this

passage as a reason for wanting to conceal the book, rather than the verse, "Rejoice, O young man," especially as it occurs first. They would have liked to take this too in the sense of R. Hanah and R. Levi, viz., to regard the bad passages as being from the evil spirit, and the good passages from the good spirit; and to say that the reason why they wanted to conceal the book was because they feared lest one wickedly inclined should take it up, and prefer to be guided by the beginning of the verse, which is heretical, and not look to the end, or, if he saw it, would say the former part is the true one. But when they saw that it concludes with, "and know that for all this," &c.—which shews that R. Hanah's explanation is untenable, for, according to his meaning, "all this" ought to be omitted—they come to the conclusion that *לֹא-יִלְכָּד* must be explained by *nevertheless*, as Resh Lakish interpreted it, i. e., "Rejoice in thy learning, and do good to thy heart, to understand what is in thy heart, according to the sight of thine eyes, for thou canst not judge except what thine eye sees, and know that, notwithstanding this, God will bring thee into judgment." The other difficulties still require a solution; let us therefore inquire into the seventh question, viz., why the sages did not think of hiding the book for the assertion, "Whatsoever thine hand finds to do," &c. (ix. 10); and the cause of it is, either it is to be explained as we have stated it in the commentary, or that the word *וְעָשָׂה* refers to *וְעָשָׂה*; and Coheleth says, because thou canst not do any good work in the grave, which might be balanced against thy sins, since the dead are free from all the commandments; and that it is preceded by the passage, "and enjoy life with thy wife," wherein Coheleth incites to the observance of the law and its commandments, as it is explained below, so that it does not belong to the heretical passages. But when they saw this verse they were astounded and dismayed at its foolish sentiments, since even a fool would be led thereby to heresy; and they at first thought that Solomon talked foolishness in saying, "Rejoice, O young man," and therefore they said that this is Solomon's own wisdom, i. e., it is nothing but nonsense; it does not become one of the common people to talk so, much less a wise man like Solomon, for how can the term *בְּנוֹר* be applied to a young man *בְּנוֹר*? it ought to be *שֶׁשׁ בְּנוֹר בְּנוֹרָתוֹ*; but more than this, it is heretical, since Moses said, "Ye shall not walk in the way of your heart" (Numb. xv. 39), and Solomon here says, "Walk in the way of your heart," &c. Now, why the sages did not burn it, but intended to hide the book, is because Solomon was no infidel; on the contrary, if his words are properly examined, it will be seen that they are perfectly true, and becoming such a wise man as he was. That an empty-headed man may shelter himself under the literal meaning of the words, is no reason why the wise men should have burned a book of such sublime sentiments. For we find in the Pentateuch, "let us make (*נַעֲשֶׂה*) man (the plural), yet there is no fear of its leading to infidelity [or polytheism], for the answer is close by it, in the singular, *וַיַּבְרָא*, and he created (Gen. i. 26, 27), so it is with

the sentiments of Solomon. The reason, however, why the wise men wanted to hide the book is, that there were in those days some popular philosophers among the Gentiles who were greatly followed, and our sages were afraid lest one of them should come forward, and say, Behold, he whose wisdom spread all over the world says, "Rejoice, O, young man," &c., and not understanding his meaning, he may be led thereby into infidelity; it therefore occurred to our sages to hide the book. But when they saw his remark, "And know that for all this he will bring thee into judgment," &c., they saw that the beginning of the verse was no nonsense, and the middle was not heretical; for the law of interpretation compelled them to take the first part of the verse also in a good sense; and they explained, "Rejoice, O young man," as referring to the mind, which attains to its highest stage by studying the wisdom of the law; i. e., till thou art called a young man; whilst thou art still a boy of tender years, occupy thyself to such an extent with the law that thou mayest be called young man; and although thou dost not study it for its own sake, yet thou wilt do thy heart good, for when thou shalt become a young man thy heart will draw thee to that which is good, to study the law for its own sake; for, as the sages of blessed memory said, "begin from motive, and you will end in doing a thing from being purely interested in it;" and mark that, notwithstanding all thy studies in the law, God will bring thee into judgment, for thou mayest not have studied, or acted, or thought as thou oughtest to have done."

This curious defence of the sages in retaining Coheleth in the canon is very important, inasmuch as it shews that even the Kabbalists, with all their contempt for literal interpretation, were greatly staggered at the difficulties adduced by these wise men for their first intention to conceal the book; and that their reasons for setting aside this intention are beset with greater difficulties than the book itself.

1724.—In the commentary of Moses Landsberger, Kabbalistic interpretation seems to have reached its climax. He does not assign any design to the book, or admit any literal meaning, but explains every verse according to the rules *Grammatica* and *Notaricum*.¹ The redeeming part of Landsberger's work is, that it is extremely short. Thus all he tells us on chap. i. 15, "*The crooked cannot be made straight*," is, that it means Cain, Korah, Balaam, Ahithophel, Gehazi, and Doeg, the six wicked ones who,

¹ For these rules of interpretation, see p. 31, &c.

according to *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan*, have no portion in the world to come.¹

1770. — A new era now commenced in Biblical exegesis, and in Hebrew literature generally. The immortal Mendelssohn was now directing the mispent Jewish intellect and zeal to the proper study of the Word of God, in accordance with the literal and grammatical sense. His first effort to this effect was the publication of a Hebrew commentary on *Cohemoth*, which appeared, according to the Jewish chronology, in 5530, *i. e.*, 1770 of the Christian era.²

Mendelssohn, too, complains that “nearly all the commentators who have preceded me have almost entirely failed in doing justice to their task of interpretation . . . I have not found in one of them an interpretation adequate to the correct explanation of the connection of the verses of the book; but, according to their method, nearly every verse is spoken separately and unconnectedly; and this would not be right in a private and insignificant author, and much less in a wise king” (p. 73). As to the design of the book, Mendelssohn thinks that *Solomon wrote it to propound the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and the necessity of leading a cheerful and contented life; and interspersed these cardinal points with lessons of minor importance, such as worship, politics, domestic economy, &c.*

Mendelssohn divides the book into thirteen sections. The *first* section, which is a sort of introduction, is from chap. i. 1 to verse 11; the *second*, from chap. i. 12 to ii. 11; the *third* is from chap. ii. 12 to 26; the *fourth*, from chap. iii. 1 to iv. 3; the *fifth*, from chap. iv. 4 to 16; the *sixth*, from chap. iv. 17 to v. 19;

¹ This precious document is contained in the שומר אמונים, *the guard of the faithful*, as he calls his commentary on the Pentateuch and five Megilloth, published in Offenbach, 1724, p. 40, &c.

² This commentary was so highly thought of, that it was almost immediately translated into German, by J. J. Rabe, the translator of the *Mishnah*, and published in Ansbach, 1771. A translation has also more recently been published by Theodor Preston, London, 1845, to which our references will be made, for the sake of the English reader.

the *seventh*, from chap. vi. 1 to vii. 14; the *eighth*, from chap. vii. 15 to viii. 9; the *ninth*, from chap. viii. 10 to ix. 12; the *tenth*, from chap. ix. 13 to x. 15; the *eleventh*, from chap. x. 16 to xi. 6; the *twelfth*, from chap. xi. 7 to xii. 7; the *thirteenth* section, which is, as it were, the conclusion and seal of the contents, is from chap. xii. 8 to the end of the book.

How much this distinguished philosopher and commentator has followed the criticisms, and sometimes even the peculiarities, of Ibn Ezra, will be seen in the course of our Commentary.

1788. — As the above commentary appeared with the Hebrew original which it purported to elucidate, David Friedländer, the worthy disciple of Mendelssohn, published, in 1788, a translation of *Cohemoth*, according to the explanation of his master, with an introduction of his own, and a valuable “treatise upon the best use of Scripture.”

We cannot do better than give Friedländer’s own words, respecting what he thinks is the design, unity, style, &c., of this book.

The real import of the whole work is: “Contemplations upon the fruitless struggle after happiness and the vanity of human affairs.” A tone of unity pervades the whole book from beginning to end, which puts it beyond a doubt that the varied experience and observations given therein have all been made by the august author, and that they are not observations made by others which he has simply collected or compiled. This is moreover evident from the interspersed wise maxims which, as is well known, are the oldest fruit of human sagacity, and are the result of real experience, contained in pithy sayings which memory easily retains. The remarks are made from a profound knowledge of the world and mankind, and are taken from common life; they have mostly a tinge of melancholy, and sometimes the colour is even thickly laid on. This imparts to them a deep interest; we hear a powerful prince of the past, possessing all the greatest earthly happiness, philosophising upon the wrong use of life, and stirring us up to the fear of God, virtue, and morality. What a powerful reason to trust to his experience, and to listen to his advice! The august author has adopted no definite plan. In his own fashion he goes through the whole of human life, and throws out his remarks upon its several positions. He contemplates, teaches, mourns, comforts, imparts counsel, contradicts, and corrects himself; and although the whole betrays the course of mere social ideas, yet the principal thread upon which all things are strung is never entirely lost.

From this point of view the apparent contradictions are easily solved. The author is no dogmatic and phlegmatic teacher, but a warm and animated examiner of truth. To a philosopher, it is essential to listen to the opposite opinions. He, without regarding his own system, listens to all objections which can be made, and does not fear the consequences of statements he admits. The difference, however, between the philosopher and our august author is, that in his book two voices, as it were, speak; or, in other words, that he candidly places before the eyes of the reader all the objections which he makes, and all that transpires in his inmost soul; HE IS NOT AFRAID TO THINK ALOUD. It would therefore be dishonest if we were to charge him with all the opinions which he adduces, and thus requite his openness; justice demands that we should adhere to that which this great man gives, at the end of his contemplations, as the result of his investigations, namely, THE CONCLUSION WHICH CONTAINS ALL IS, FEAR GOD, KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, THIS IS THE DESTINY OF MAN.

The best commentaries agree that Coheleth must be judged in this way, and no careful reader can refuse his assent to this opinion.

It will be seen from the above that the import and plan of this book differ from the import and plan of all other books of the Bible. The same is the case with its language; it is unmistakably different from the language of older or contemporary writings. Single words and phrases, compounds and idioms, as well as certain repetitions and favourite expressions, are peculiar to this book. It may therefore rightly be asserted, that with respect to expression and style, as well as import and tone, Coheleth has no companion in the whole Bible. Whether this is merely to be ascribed to the author's manner of philosophising, or to some other causes, I dare not decide. But this much is certain, that the great obscurity which rests upon the whole is very much increased through the want of parallels; it is this which increases the difficulty of interpreting it.¹

In addition to this very comprehensive introduction, Friedländer gives a summary of the contents of every paragraph, which Mendelssohn has not done. As we have therein not only the disciple's opinion of the plan of Coheleth, but also the idea of the great master, we give it entire.

The first section (chap. i. 1-11) is an introduction, wherein the preacher speaks generally: all earthly things, all the work and industry of man, are utterly vain and useless. All things in nature will always continue as they now are, for everything has been predetermined; all things move in a per-

¹ Der Prediger, aus dem Hebräischen von David Friedländer, Berlin, 1788, pp. 82-86.

petual round; man cannot create anything new, he can only separate or join in a different way that which is created.

The second section (chap. i. 12-ii. 11).—Searching does not make us happy; the more knowledge, the more suffering. The impossibility of accomplishing our desire to make the imperfect perfect, and correct the crooked, is a source of grief. The enjoyment of sensual pleasures, so far from making us happy, terminates in disgust; neither does the combination of intellectual enjoyment and sensual pleasures make one happy: all is vanity and emptiness.

The third section (chap. ii. 12-26).—Wisdom has indeed an essential advantage over folly. To be occupied in researches and study, is a far nobler employment than to pursue sensual pleasures; still, the wise and the fool have the same destiny, the name of both is soon forgotten. This makes life hateful; the thought that I may leave my hard-earned goods to an unworthy heir is also grievous. Nay, even one's own enjoyment of the present is not in the power of man, for all is fixed beforehand.

The fourth section (chap. iii. 1-iv. 3).—A further development of the same idea. Everything seems to have its root in eternal predestination; everything in the moral and physical world is subject to an iron necessity; man can make no alteration in the course of things. Nothing, however, is absolutely evil; things are apparently evil, but result in good. God's ultimate design is always effected; when men choose they act arbitrarily, but after all the will of God is done. There must be a future when good and evil will be rewarded, else the injustice so frequently practised here would be incompatible with the justice and mercy of the Creator. A future would necessarily presuppose immortality, still this cannot be demonstrated from the nature of the soul; man and beast seem to be accidental and perishing beings; but the violence perpetrated under the sun, the tears of the oppressed, speak loudly for a future and immortality.

The fifth section (chap. iv. 4-16) is on matters of social happiness. Many find a source of happiness in the exertion of industry, but the mainspring is jealousy, every one being desirous to be above his neighbour. Verse 5 gives the remark of the industrious, and verse 6 the reply of the lazy. The royal preacher recommends social and matrimonial life; married people have a good reward; children make the bond of union still tighter. The wise ought to rule; birth has no claim to the throne. The populace are always for new governments; the worthlessness of popular favour.

The sixth section (chap. iv. 17-v. 19).—True piety consists in fearing God, and not in costly sacrifices, or in much unintelligible prayer; sin not, and sacrifice not. Human government is imperfect; one man cannot superintend all the government, and the prince is easily deceived by the necessary multitude of state officials. Even a farmer-king must have subordinates whom he trusts, how much more requires a great potentate? Riches do not make happy; they often make one unhappy. Man departs

naked from this world, and many a one does not even take with him good actions as a sign of his conduct; many a one wastes away this life by niggardliness; a rational use of one's possessions is happiness and the will of God.

The seventh section (chap. vi. 1-vii. 14).—Repeated complaints against Providence, that many want the sense to enjoy their possessions. The advantage of wisdom is nothing, if the wise must suffer. The doctrine of predestination is repeated in answer to these complaints; we cannot contend with a mighty one; murmuring is therefore useless, especially as that which the wise must do without is worthless and vanity. The idea of earthly happiness is very vague, which is shown by several examples; then follow detached lessons and wise sayings. The whole universe is intimately connected, and bears the impress of the sublimity, goodness, and wisdom of the Author; it is therefore reasonable that we should not murmur against God, but bear our fate with patience and resignation.

The eighth section (chap. vii. 15-viii. 9).—Rules for governing and admonitions to princes. Absolute justice is impracticable for the transactions of government; experience, too, teaches that it is not for man. It is now impossible to ascertain whether man was originally perfect; at present he is not. Folly and ignorance are the source of vice; sensuality, which goes by the name of folly, is here personified as a harlot, and, by the way, an attack is made upon the whole female sex. Another cause of evil in the world is man's daily increasing wants; naturally he has few wants, but they are multiplied in social connections. Rules for subjects. Admonitions not to enter into any conspiracy against rulers. A faithful servant of state will suffer and be quiet; a tyrant does not last long; he can, as little as other earthborn children, escape plagues, natural death, and being killed in war—experience shews this.

The ninth section (chap. viii. 10-ix. 12). Further contemplations on the apparent prosperity of the wicked and adversity of the good. Because punishment does not always follow immediately upon transgression, the wicked are inclined to believe that there is no retribution; but it is certain that the righteous will be happy in a future life; the prosperity of the wicked is but momentary, and will pass away like a shadow. If the virtuous were always prosperous and the vicious unfortunate, there would be no merit in virtue. We cannot judge the whole, and from the little we see taking place upon earth, no conclusion can be formed; but this much is certain, that without another world and immortality, future punishment and reward, the whole would be inexplicable. To judge from what takes place here below, sensual pleasure would seem the highest good; and this too brings care and trouble, and at last causes disgust and vexation. If all terminated with this life, everything would contradict our moral nature, for the same things happen alike to all. It cannot be reconciled with the justice of the Creator, that so many sinners, without repenting in the least, depart into

the realms of the dead; their existence becomes for them a positive curse. Moreover, without a future, earthly life would be the highest good; and life, however miserable, would be preferable to annihilation, from which the soul recoils. The living dog would be better than a dead lion. What keeps us from breaking all laws, to accomplish all for which we have power, to break through all bonds which are in the way of our gratifications? But all this is contrary to the moral sense of man. Moreover, this happiness is not always the portion of the able and wise. The swift does not always win the race. This is another source of pain to him who denies a future life. The conviction of immortality, and reward and punishment in another life, can alone remove the doubt and reconcile these contradictions. Here below we are not able to survey the whole, to distinguish apparent good and apparent evil, and hence are also not able to judge of the way of Providence; but the future will throw light upon all these obscurities, and solve all these apparent contradictions into the most beautiful harmony.

The tenth section (chap. ix. 13-x. 15) Observations on the value of intellectual powers with respect to political matters, illustrated by an example—the smallest error of a wise man may involve the most serious consequences. Fools do not rule long; if they attain to important offices, through the rashness of the prince, their honour is of short duration. Flatterers and slanderers cannot go on long; being always obliged to contrive new ways to advance, they consume their powers. Wisdom goes only one way, the straight one, and thereby always overthrows her enemies.

The eleventh section (chap. x. 16-xi. 6). Description of a bad government; caution in judging it is recommended. Encouragements to commerce and alliance with other nations; rules to be observed thereby. As the preacher recommends attention to misfortunes which may happen in the course of nature, so he also warns against all superstitious sooth-saying, forebodings, watching the clouds, and other offsprings of an unbridled imagination.

The twelfth section (chap. xi. 7-xii. 7). Rest is desirable after labour, and enjoyment of what one has acquired. But the enjoyment must be moderate, and in keeping with the laws prescribed by the fear of God and the regulations of man. Hereupon follows an allegorical description of old age, and the decay of the mind and body, which is extremely difficult to explain. (Many words in this section are foreign, and can only be explained and translated by conjecture.)

The thirteenth section (chap. xii. 8-14). The conclusion. The preacher says that his object in this treatise was to teach man the truth which is useful for them, and that he has endeavoured to express himself attractively, to make a deeper impression on them. The conclusion of the whole enquiry is, that all the doings of man will be brought before the judgment of God, and that we are therefore to fear Him and keep His commandments.

This sensible introduction and analysis of Coheleth shew how creditably Friedländer responded to the appeal of his master in defence of rational exegesis.

1831.—In 1831 Moses Heinemann published a translation of Coheleth, with brief but comprehensive notes. He too thinks that this book contains a collection of diverse experiences, observations, opinions, truths, and lessons of wisdom, which Solomon collected together (hence the name קֹהֵלֶת, collector or compiler), to shew that everlasting life is the sole end of our existence here, and that everything earthly and sensual is vain, foolish, and transitory.¹ This view of regarding the book as a collection of different opinions, &c., has its origin in an anxiety to remove from Solomon every obnoxious sentiment. Hence Heinemann's very forced explanation of

Chap. iii. 18-21. *I thought in my heart, &c.*—Among the different sections of faith, egotism often produces so-called libertines, who ridicule all Divine revelation and reject every religious ordinance; whilst, touching freedom of will, they consider the giving of law to emanate from their peculiar intellect, and form rules of life according to their arbitrary inclinations. Respecting such arrogant individuals Coheleth remarks that they consider themselves the chosen of God by virtue of their reason, making the greatest dignity of man and his prerogatives above all other creatures to consist in being the cause of their actions. Coheleth, whilst characterising such a mode of thinking as recommends acts contrary to the Divine will as sceptical, places the latter on a par with the use of intuitive actions in irrational creatures, and regards the works of both, like all earthly things, as perishable and aimless, as vain and empty. And though it is certain that the human spirit, by virtue of its power of development and capacities, rises higher and higher to the uppermost intellectual spheres, yet are we as unable to say whether such a misguided spirit as has departed from the way of the law will reach that uppermost height, where the obedient may approach the Deity to enjoy its bliss in the voice of the Divine favour, as we are unable to define the low point of the animal spirit.²

1837.—This mode of forcing upon the sacred writer philosophic sentiments, which are alike contrary to the scope of the

¹ Uebersetzung des Koheleth, nebst grammatisch exegetischem Commentar von Moses Heinemann, Berlin, 1831, p. 3, and p. 129.

² Commentary, p. 34, &c.

passage and the simple meaning of the text, in order to overcome difficulties which are insurmountable without the true clue to the design of the book, is adopted to a still larger extent by S. H. Auerbach. In 1837 he published a German translation of this book, with the original text, and a Hebrew commentary, maintaining quite a new theory, that Solomon wrote Coheleth (which signifies *philosophy*) to shew the relation of man both to himself and to his fellow men, or society.

The sacred writer (Auerbach tells us) starts with the idea that all things in nature are ordained by the Creator for a certain end, unknown to us, whereunto all creation must follow, according to the inwardly working powers of the Deity. And as man, though individually possessing a free will in relation to the whole, is subject to these laws of nature with all his actions and will—so that he, like all other creatures, cannot and must not resist the power of the whole, or the great design of the Creator—he cannot calculate beforehand with certainty the result of his actions, or the success of his aims and efforts. If, therefore, his aims are to be successful, they must harmonise with those of the whole, or of God. But, as the purposes of God are unknown to man, nay are incomprehensible, a harmony and a right conduct on the part of man with regard to God must be purely accidental. Successful undertakings are therefore nothing else than accidentally right and proper catches of the design or will of God, inasmuch as those undertakings have been subservient to the aim of the whole.

The creative will of the divine powers—אלהים, synonymous with the expression *nature*, i. e., the producing power—which, united in the one Being (אֵל), unremittingly work on in such a diversity of ways, that the power of the human soul, being borne along, only passes a subjective judgment, dependent upon the present moment. The soul can comprehend and grasp things only as they are momentarily brought before her by the sensible world. All depends upon this external, momentary, and accidental impression. Even to will and not to will, or love and hatred, are not in the positive intellectual powers of man, but in the positive representation of things; and on this, again, time and space, by which man is swayed, have an important influence, so that one and the same thing, which received in one moment our affirmative, will in the next moment have a negative.

Man has indeed the power of adding to or taking from existing things, or to hate and love; but this power is circumscribed by time and circumstances, namely, can be exercised only in the position in which the things are before him (אֵלֶיךָ, Coheleth ix. 1), in the outer and sensible world. Hence the fate of a man very often depends upon a single accident or judgment; and hence also the defects which he sees are frequently not objective, but subjective. Thus, for instance, the most moral, just, pious, and wise man

may suffer throughout the whole of his life for a single error, because he has not rightly comprehended and judged a thing *there* (םֶּשֶׁ, *Ibid.* iii. 17), where it then was in time and space; and the unrestrainable consequence, which is always only in accordance with the Divine purpose as regards the whole, will stamp his act, then performed, as a failure and misdemeanor.¹

Having given us this philosophic disquisition, which we are to take as the main idea of the sacred writer, Auerbach submits that the book consists of two parts, comprising two treatises or discourses; the first, as we gather from his Commentary, extends from chap. ii. to vii. 24; and the second, from chap. vii. 25 to xii. 8, and that each of these parts has two sections, viz., i. 1–iii. 22, and iv. 1–vii. 24, form the two sections of the first part; and vii. 25–ix. 10, and ix. 11–xii. 8, are the two sections of the second part. The first section, in each case, we are told contains the enquiry, or is philosophical; and the second gives the application, or is practical.

PART I.

THE FIRST SECTION (chap. i. 1–iii. 22) treats on the relation of man to himself with respect to the all-ruling order of God here below, in which man can neither effect a change nor produce anything new, and hence cannot of himself, with his physical or moral powers, be the author of his earthly happiness. And the section concludes with the lesson deduced therefrom, that, since man is as perishable and vain as all other creatures, it can hardly be defined with certainty whether his powers and capacities, when compared with those of animals, are to be regarded as superior, inasmuch as man and the animal are both passive instruments of Providence, the whole of man's earthly happiness would accordingly be to make the best of his fate and of the present, and submit resignedly to the fulfilment of his duties. Hereupon follows

THE SECOND SECTION (chap. iv. 1–vii. 24), which is the application or practical part, wherein the author discloses to man his grossest defects and infirmities, warring in him and depriving him of the enjoyment of peace, *e.g.*, avarice, envy, &c., &c., in order to cure the evil.

PART II treats on the relation of man to his fellow man, or society, and in

THE FIRST SECTION (chap. vii. 25–ix. 10) examines whether and how man can therein find happiness. His first thought on social life leads to woman, the natural and inseparable companion of man, who fatally affects the destiny of man. He is then forced, as it were, by her to the consideration

¹ See the introductory Epistle to the Commentary, pp. 8 and 9.

of the pomp and gaiety of the world, the varieties of fame, wealth, and ambition, since that which man desires under these circumstances, he, even with his innate capacities, cannot obtain, if he is not favoured by special circumstances. As in the former part, the author shews us the vanity of man's exertion and toil, and then concludes with the lesson that man, knowing his frailty, should enjoy life with the woman he loves, and try to derive as much pleasure as possible from all his toil. Whereupon again follows—

THE SECOND SECTION (chap. ix. 11–xii. 8) which is again the application, or the practical one. The sacred writer gives some of the most important rules of life to the man who is to enter into social life, *e.g.*, to have social feelings, to be dauntless, cautious, diligent, forbearing, &c., and concludes with the admonition to enjoy life, before the weakness of old age comes on, and death terminates our existence.

At the conclusion (chap. xii. 8–14) a few verses are appended, which contain a summary view of the whole work, telling us that the sacred writer wanted to find out something new, and, instead of it, felt himself constrained to write down the old truth; that all the words of the wise tend to one thing; that therefore all book-making, and prying into things, are superfluous; and that we are to fear God and keep His commandments, because by this only will the good or bad of every action be determined.¹

To make the sacred writer propound this philosophic theory, Auerbach proceeds to translate many passages in a most unnatural and unjustifiable way. The rendering of chap. iii. 18–22 will suffice as a specimen.²

I thus thought with respect to men: May God make it clear to them, that they may see how that, with respect to their existence, they are like *beasts*. For whether it be the destiny of man, or that of a beast, it is *always* only one destiny; the one dies like the other, the capacities of both terminate alike, and the superiority of man is without influence, because all is vain. Both make the same way, they come from the earth, and return to it. Who can therefore determine whether man's higher strivings be higher, and the animals' lower strivings be lower? I, on the contrary,

¹ See the introductory Epistle to the Commentary, pp. 12 and 13.

² Ich dachte also in Betreff der Menschen: möge es ihnen Gott erläutern, daß sie einsehen, wie sie in Rücksicht ihres Daseins gleich dem Viehe sind. Denn, es sei das Schicksal des Menschen oder das des Viehes, es ist immer nur Ein Schicksal; jener stirbt wie dieses, beider Fähigkeiten laufen auf Eins hinaus und auch des Menschen Vorzug ist ohne Einfluß, weil Alles eitel ist. Sie machen beide einen gleichen Weg; sie entstehen von der Erde und kehren dahin zurück. Wer kann also nun bestimmen, daß des Menschen höheres Streben das Höhere sei, und des Viehes niedrigeres Streben das Niedrige sei; ich beschliesse

conclude that man has no other advantage than to rejoice in the discharge of his duties, for this alone is his portion, because no one can shew him the future and its consequences.

1838.—No commentator, since Rashbam, has so strictly adhered to the literal and grammatical meaning of *Cohemoth* as Herzfeld, now chief Rabbi of Brunswick, and so well known by his very elaborate history of the Jews. He, however, advances a new theory, viz., that *the design of Cohemoth is to demonstrate the vanity of all things; and, by thus shewing up the exertions of ALL men to be alike vain, the sacred writer tries to comfort his unhappy nation, who imagined that THEY ALONE are given up to misfortunes.* Thus Herzfeld tells us —

The sole tendency of the book is to teach the vanity of human efforts. And now, since xii. 9, and the whole colouring of the book, shew that it was intended for the people, the question is, what effect did the writer think to produce thereby upon the people? It could surely not have been the intention of our old Jewish sage to make philosophers of the people; and just as little could it have entered into his mind to temper the pride of his fellow-citizens with such a *memento mori*, since this nation had, for thousands of years, not been out of the school of sufferings for a single decade of years. There is, however, another object left: the demonstrations in our book of the vanity of all that is human, are so entirely free from all peculiarly national colouring — so much so, that the peculiarly national term *אֱלֹהִים*, to designate the Deity, is dropped, and *אֱלֹהִים* is invariably used — that the writer evidently did not intend to confine his demonstrations to the circumstances under which this people lived, but extended them to the circumstances of mankind generally. Now, by shewing that the exertions of *all* men are alike vain, he tries to comfort his unhappy people, and take away their belief, that they alone were given up to misery.¹

The chief Rabbi of Brunswick divides the book into *nineteen* sections. The *first* section is from chap. i. 1 to 11; the *second*, from chap. i. 12 to 18; the *third*, from chap. ii. 1 to 11; the

vielmehr, daß dem Menschen nichts mehr frommt, als sich seiner Pflichterfüllung zu erfreuen, denn nur dieses ist sein Theil, weil ihm Niemand die Zukunft und ihre Folgen zeigen kann.

¹ *Cohemoth* übersetzt und erläutert von Dr. L. Herzfeld, Braunschweig, 1838, p. 10, &c.

fourth, from chap. ii. 12 to 23; the *fifth*, from chap. ii. 24 to iii. 15; the *sixth*, from chap. iii. 16 to iv. 3; the *seventh*, from chap. iv. 4 to 12; the *eighth*, from chap. iv. 13 to 16; the *ninth*, from chap. iv. 17 to v. 6; the *tenth*, from chap. v. 7 to vii. 9; the *eleventh*, from chap. vii. 10 to 22; the *twelfth*, from chap. vii. 23 to 24; the *thirteenth*, from chap. vii. 25 to viii. 13; the *fourteenth*, from chap. viii. 14 to 15; the *fifteenth*, from chap. viii. 16 to ix. 12; the *sixteenth*, from chap. ix. 13 to x. 3; the *seventeenth*, from chap. x. 4 to 20; the *eighteenth*, from chap. xi. 1 to xii. 8; the *nineteenth* section is from chap. xii. 9 to 14.

The commentary is preceded by an introduction of three chapters, treating respectively on the *contents*, *tendency*, and *character* of *Cohemoth*. The third chapter, viz., the one treating on the character of the book, is directed against Knobel, who, in his then recent commentary, entered very minutely into the later Hebrew words and phrases of *Cohemoth*, shewing up a prodigious number of them, and Herzfeld reduces "the expressions and constructions foreign to the old literature," to about eleven or fifteen, and "the Chaldaisms" to about eight or ten. This has been hailed by the defenders of the antiquity of *Cohemoth*, who to this day quote the chief Rabbi of Brunswick, in opposition to those who maintain that the diction of this book belongs to the time when the Hebrew language was extremely vitiated and rapidly dying away. But the chronological order we have adopted will soon bring us back to Herzfeld, and his view upon this subject.

1848. — The sixteenth volume of Cahen's celebrated edition of the Hebrew Bible, with a French translation, and philological and explanatory notes, contains a commentary on *Cohemoth*, which, as Cahen informs us,¹ is chiefly made up from a communication of Leopold Dukes, to whom Hebrew literati are so

¹ La plus grande partie de ce que nous allons dire sur *L'Ecclesiaste* est de M. Dukes; il en est de même des notes. Ce savant a bien voulu nous donner sur ce livre intéressant un travail que nous avons tantôt modifié, tantôt abrégé. Nous avons aussi puisé à quelques autres sources. La Bible, par S. Cahen, tome seizième, à Paris, 1848, Avant-propos., p. xxv.

largely indebted for his numerous literary productions. We must therefore regard that which Dukes and Cahen conjointly propound about this book as the Duko-Cahen view.

The design of the book, we are here told, *is to propound the philosophy of life, which the author, who is a sceptic, does, by treating upon the following questions: What is the world? What is its destiny? Is it governed by a superior intelligence, or is it the toy of chance? Is the soul mortal or immortal?* To give the reader a proper idea of this novel view, we must let these learned men speak for themselves. Cahen says that —

M. Dukes compares the course of the reflections of Ecclesiastes to the veil which, among the Egyptians, covered the statue of Isis. No mortal was permitted to raise this veil, but every one was allowed to give his opinion as to what was behind it. Heraclites and Democrites, placed before this veil, commented on it each in his own way, the one weeping, the other laughing; our book holds the middle course between these two ways. Doubt resembles a cloud which appears on the horizon, grows imperceptibly, and announces tempest, which the power of man knows not how to appease. Doubt begins with the individual, and finishes with the world; the solution begins with the world, and finishes with the individual. Doubt is the fruit of contemplation, but it is like children who instruct their mothers, or like spices which give a good flavour to food. Doubt by itself is of no use; its value consists in the service which it renders to reflection; one is not to stop at doubt, it must serve him as a vehicle. Doubt is as old as reflection. Before Descartes, a Spanish proverb said, *El que no duda, no sabe algunas* — He who doubts nothing knows nothing; and before the Spanish, a Greek philosopher had already propounded this principle as the foundation of all knowledge.

The sacred writer was a philosopher, who wished to view life from an elevated stand-point; he would not content himself with the limited horizon of those men who, taking life as it is, do not complain, except when fortune is against them. He speaks for humanity, and his words have always found an echo. His book is a great monologue, which presents life to us in energetic traits, and its laconic style shews the profoundness of the thinker. It is scepticism softened by maxims. The object which the writer has most prominently before him is the future destiny of man.

It is doubt, the vanity of the things of this world, which forms the thread of the entire book. The writer begins with "*All is vanity*" (i. 2), and repeats it at the end of the book (xii. 9). To prove this, he accumulates different observations on human life and its vicissitudes. He weighs all, business and leisure, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, and determines

what is true and what is false; what is lasting, and what is perishable; what is real, and what is apparent. He adopts no methodical arrangement, but simply the association of ideas. He asks himself, What is the world? What is its destiny? Is it governed by a superior intelligence, or is it the toy of chance? Is the soul mortal or immortal? These are the questions on which our author treats.¹

1854. — Whilst Cahen was editing his gigantic Bible work in France — where Rashi, Rashbam, and many other eminent Jews had laboured to explain the Word of God, at a period when the so-called Christians were engrossed with the Crusade and the extermination of heretics — Philippson was at the same time busy with the publication of a similar work in Germany. This splendid edition of the Bible, besides giving the Hebrew original with a German translation in parallel columns, and a critical and exegetical commentary, is illustrated with upwards of five hundred English woodcuts.

The Rabbi of Magdeburg also could not acquiesce in any of the multifarious theories propounded by the long succession of commentators, as to the design of Coheleth, and therefore advanced a new view. He maintains that *the object of the book is to shew that a belief in the vanity of human life is not only compatible with a belief in God and moral efforts, but that by combining the two together the sole end and value of life is manifested.*² According to Philippson, Coheleth consists of *three parts and an epilogue*.

THE FIRST PART (chap. i. 2 — iii. 22), which is the general one, has *three sections*. After giving the main observation as if it were the motto, that all is vanity (chap. i. 2), the sacred writer shews that this applies to all things in general (sect. i, chap. i. 3–11), and to the affairs of life in particular (sect. ii., chap. i. 12–ii. 23), and then deduces therefrom a rule of life, and shews its soundness (sect. iii., chap. ii. 24–iii. 22).

¹ See Introduction, pp. xxv., xxvii. We wish our space had permitted us to give the whole of this very instructive Introduction.

² Die Israelitische Bibel, von Ludwig Philippson, Dritter Theil, 1854, pp. 746, 747.

THE SECOND PART (chap. iv. 1 – xi. 8), which is the special one, has *two sections*. Coheleth considers the more important events of human life from the point of view attained (sect. i., chap. iv. 1 – vii. 12), and describes the conduct of a wise man according to his opinion, following the given rule of life (sect. ii., chap. vii. 1 – xi. 8).

THE THIRD PART (chap. xi. 9 – xii. 8) gives the result of the whole investigation, a close application of his established rule of life, and concludes with the main observation, namely, that all is vanity.

THE EPILOGUE (chap. xii. 9–14) having been added by the author shortly after the completion of the book, in consequence of some scruples which arose among a small circle of friends to whom he first read it, warns that the book is not to be read with levity of mind, and shews, in a brief and striking manner, its religious stand-point.¹

This is the design, and this the division of the book, according to the chief Rabbi of Magdeburg, Dr. Philippson.

1855 — We now return to the chief Rabbi of Brunswick, Dr. Herzfeld. In the first volume of his “History of the people of Israel” (of which the first number appeared in 1855), Herzfeld, after the lapse of seventeen years, takes up again his old favourite, Coheleth. As so much has been said about his defence of the book, we shall give his more matured view of its design and age entire.

The design of Coheleth is *to shew that all is vanity, and that man cannot secure even the vain happiness of this earth*. The author puts his observations into the mouth of Solomon, because in him were united royal power and great wisdom, the fame of which would invest his words with authority; and because he only who possessed all this, and by means of it secured all kinds of pleasures, is entitled to such a general declaration that all is vanity. Accordingly, Solomon shews that all his splendour could not yield him happiness; nor could all human wisdom do it, because of its being very limited, and because it is utterly impossible by its aid to turn to our

¹ Die Israelitische Bibel, von Ludwig Philippson, Dritter Theil, 1854, pp. 750, 751.

advantage sublunary things, for all things, even the “transactions, love, and hatred” of man, are under a divine fatality; nor, lastly, was virtue capable of making him happy, since earthly happiness is not always bestowed according to moral worth, but is purely a gift of God. This will not appear awful to one who believes in a future life, where virtue, unrewarded here, will be rewarded; but this belief, which was then still novel, had to struggle with such great doubts in the mind of the author, that it often was overcome. When looking in such hopeless moments at the distribution of happiness and misery, without any regard to the worth of the recipient, he would have regarded God as unjust, but for the pious feelings which strove against it; he therefore preferred to conclude that God governs the world by a higher and inscrutable method, according to which he distributes unmerited lots in single instances, without however being unjust, when that higher method does not require it. Man can receive good from God in two ways — as a reward for virtue, whenever that method permits it; and as a free gift, most likely in order to further that method; but man may also lose it in two ways — first by his vicious conduct, and then through a wrong adjustment of his circumstances. Hence, although we cannot with certainty secure happiness by our industry, there are instances, nevertheless, where our conduct may influence our happiness or misery. It does not contradict his theme when the author, in treating upon it, especially towards the end, intersperses a number of peculiar moral and wise rules, recommending the enjoyment of every lawful pleasure which presents itself, manly self-denial in misfortune, quiet endurance of all that cannot be averted, in which the epicurean and stoical views are thoroughly blended together. Still these interspersed rules are a secondary matter with the author, and are often involuntary digressions; his main object is to preach the vanity of all things human. By keeping his illustration free from all national colouring, the author, who probably wrote about the end of the Persian dominion, wanted to shew his oppressed nation that no other nation is much better off than they are; the Messianic hopes must have nearly disappeared at that time. As to the importance of the book, we submit that the very fact of its entering upon new ground, i. e., philosophy, is in itself of no small importance. There are single questions in the Prophets and Psalms of higher importance, but they are not explained, not dialectically pursued; they are either left unanswered, or answered not logically, but in a lyrically or prophetically peremptory declaration. A more expansive course has indeed been pursued in the book of Job; the enquiry *why* and *whether* (not *whether* and *why*) the righteous often suffer and the wicked prosper, receives many phases; but here again the discourses turn throughout into the lyric, and with the lyric the argument is lost; and God, who appears at the conclusion, does not answer the proposed question, but cuts it off, and bids the sophists be silent. It is only in Coheleth that it appears in prose, which is the only adequate form for philosophic disquisition; and it is not the author's fault that the way which

he opened has been left untrodden by his successors. Moreover, the independence and openness of his sentiments are highly to be praised; in these he has not only surpassed all the canonical and apocryphal writers, but also Philo and the philosophers of our Arabian school. He has also, from his point of view, satisfactorily solved the proposed question. It is only to be regretted that he has not conceded a value to virtue independent of reward, as his investigations brought him so closely to it. The treatise is unequal. That the author drops Solomon almost entirely, as soon as he has made him explain that all his grandeur could not make him happy, is owing to the fact that a royal mouth was not requisite for the other declarations, and, as has already been remarked, that he never seriously intended to ascribe it to Solomon. There is a plan in the arrangement of it, which however is not always preserved, and we must frequently be satisfied with the unity of the theme, which is far better observed. The style of the composition is for the most part simple in the discursive portions, but sometimes diffuse and clumsy, because the author had to create a philosophical language. The words newly made or newly applied for this purpose indicate skill; the observations and admonitions interspersed are in a gnomic form, but are no great performance; finally, the description of old age and approaching death, at the end of the book, though suffering from an oriental redundancy of figure, has a great charm in its vacillation between lyric and elegy.¹

To this exposition of the design, importance, plan, and diction of the book, which is given in the text of the history, Herzfeld adds, in the twentieth Excursus, a disquisition on the authorship of *Cohleth*. As this must be especially interesting to those who have so frequently appealed to him upon this subject, we shall also give it entire.

All that I have to say upon *Cohleth* will be found dispersed through the introduction of my Commentary, published in 1838, except the much disputed Solomonian authorship, about which I promised to explain myself another time. Some greatly blamed me for this caution, and others again charged me with taking Solomon to be the author, although the very reverse is to be deduced from numerous passages in the introduction and commentary. The cause of my silence was simply owing to the fact that seventeen years ago a Jewish theologian could not handle Biblical criticism without serious danger. However, the point then passed by must now be retrieved.

The book itself states (i. 1. 12) that a son of David, king in Israel, i. e., Solomon, is the author; and hence the origin of the unanimous popular

¹ Geschichte des Volkes Israel, von Dr. L. Herzfeld, Nordhausen, 1857; Zweiter Band, pp. 28-31.

tradition, which is by no means contradicted by the assertion that King Hezekiah and his associates wrote *Cohleth* (Baba Bathra, 15, a), as this simply refers to the final editorship. But Solomon, whose father first elevated Jerusalem to a royal residence, could not say "more than all (kings) who were before me in Jerusalem" (i. 16; ii. 7), nor recommend to wait cautiously for an opportunity to rise against a tyrant (viii. 5, 6), nor give a description of a royal spendthrift (x. 16-19), nor were the people so unhappy in his time, as iv. 1, v. 7 presuppose. The complaints about unrighteous judges (iii. 17), about violence (iv. 1; v. 7), about unworthy filling of places of honour (x. 5-7)—it might be urged, are not so very strange, for a king who has once placed himself in the position of a popular teacher. But still, this objection against the Solomonian authorship has some weight when added to the former. Moreover, the belief in the return of the soul to God, though questioned in iii. 21, being nevertheless so common as to be discussed in a popular work, and even obtain the victory, cannot be ascribed to Solomon, for there is no trace of it to be found from his days till after the exile. Finally, I have shewn in my commentary (p. 13-22), that although many words and phrases in *Cohleth* are wrongly explained as later Hebrew or Chaldaean, there yet remains a considerable number of both in the book. All these arguments combined are perfectly sufficient to shew that Solomon is not the author of this book. This done, we can now give some clues for ascertaining the date of its composition, which we were obliged to omit before. The Chaldaisms in it would not oblige us to put it later than the Chaldaean invasion; but the state in which the doctrine of the immortality of the soul appears therein, and its eleven to fifteen later Hebrew expressions, speak for its being written a century at least after the exile. But it appears to me to be of a still later date, from the two following reasons:—1. The word *חִכְמָא*, as I have already shewn in the commentary (p. 25), denotes such a speaker in congregations, as the *Sopherim* (*סופרים*) were. The author could not have newly formed this word in order to apply it to Solomon, as this designation is not at all applicable to him; it must already have existed, and obtained the secondary signification of *teacher of wisdom*, before it could be applied to Solomon. Now, the *Sopherim* (*סופרים*) did not appear in Judea till the time of Ezra, and the expression *Cohleth* (*חִכְמָא*), to designate them, must have originated after it; and its transition from the primary to a secondary sense must have taken place later still. 2. The *חִכְמָא* (*חִכְמָא*) (xii. 11) are evidently the same as the *סופרים*. On the other hand, the political horizon of the author (iv. 13-16, comp. the commentary) does not tally with the dominion of the Ptolemies extending to the Maccabean period, or with the Seleucian to a date nearly as late, but perfectly corresponds with the last century of the Persian dominion. I therefore believe that this book was written shortly before the era of Alexander the Great. The fear, that every sigh about the rulers may be betrayed (x. 20), perfectly harmonises with this time. This view does not, indeed, agree with the remark that *Cohleth*

was locked up because of its questionable contents, till the men of the great synagogue liberated it (Aboth R. Nathan, c. 1); but this modern note cannot subvert a well weighed result of criticism, and is also contradicted by Shabbath, 30, b, where it is related that "the sages" wanted to hide it from the people, but ultimately abstained from it.¹

We think that Rabbi Herzfeld will henceforth be no authority with those who have hitherto appealed to him in corroboration of the pure Hebrew diction and Solomonic authorship of Coheleth.

1858. — There is, however, another Jewish commentator, though not a chief Rabbi, yet of some considerable ability, who still maintains the Solomonic authorship, and might henceforth have been quoted as an authority upon this subject instead of Herzfeld, were it not for the extravagant and eccentric theories which he propounds. The individual is Nathan Rosenthal, who published, in 1858, the text of Coheleth, with a German translation, and an extensive Hebrew commentary, in which he advances an entirely new view as to the design of this book. According to him, Solomon, who was an *Eclectic* (קְהֵלִית, *vide supra*, p. 4, No. 4), wrote this book, *both to shew that wisdom is useful only in proportion as it is combined with the fear of God and the keeping of his commands, and to remove from us the pernicious opinion of the philosophers, who believed that everlasting happiness, and the immortality of the soul, depend upon the cultivation of the intellect, and not upon our conduct and works; thus making no distinction between those who serve God and those who serve him not, by teaching us the very reverse, namely, that it is through the law and fear of God that man can attain to spiritual and everlasting happiness.*²

As to the question, "How could Solomon collect different philosophic systems which were foreign to the Jews, and did not appear among the Gentiles till many centuries after, since

¹ Geschichte des Volkes Israel, vol. ii., pp. 66, 67.

² Koheleth von Salomo, übersetzt nebst einem ebräischen Commentar von Nathan Rosenthal, Prag., 1858, p. 11.

Thales, the first philosopher, lived about four hundred years after Solomon?" Rosenthal submits that philosophic systems existed from time immemorial; that Plato got his wisdom from the Prophets; Socrates learned his from Ahithophel and Asaph the Korahite; Aristotle stole his from the writings of Solomon, which he seized when at Jerusalem with Alexander,¹ &c., there being nothing new under the sun, since even the *Telegraph* is referred to in Ps. xix. 4.² Chap. iii. 18 will suffice as a specimen of some of his renderings.

I thought within myself about the talk of the children of men that they enjoy the food of the gods, and give themselves the appearance that they are their favourite animals.³

Rosenthal maintains that Solomon refers in this passage to the food of the gods, and the nectar which the ancients said the soul enjoyed when reposing from her labours.

1860. — The last, and the most remarkable, Jewish production on Coheleth, is by Professor S. D. Luzzatto. It is printed in the third annual volume of Hebrew Essays and Reviews,⁴ and purports to be the Introduction to an unpublished commentary upon our book, written thirty-six years ago. After bitterly complaining that all commentators have misunderstood and outraged the sense of Coheleth, Luzzatto maintains that *the book totally denies the immortality of the soul, and recommends the enjoyment of carnal pleasures, as the only thing left for man; that it was written after the Babylonish captivity by a man of the name of Coheleth, who, to invest it with authority, ascribed it to Solomon,*

¹ Koheleth von Salomo, übersetzt nebst einem ebräischen Commentar von Nathan Rosenthal, Prag., 1858, pp. 12, 13.

² על ההמצאה החדשה של חזקת חוש הדינא בכל מרחקי ארץ ונושא אומר ודברים עד קצה חבל הנקרא מעלענראח אף שהיא אחת מן ההמצאות היותר חדשות ואינו נמצא כדומה לו בעולם הישן שמעתי מחכם אחד שיש רכז עליה בכתוב: אין אדם ואין דברים בלי נשמת קולם בכל הארץ יצא קולם ובקצה חבל מלחם p. 22

³ Ich dachte nach auf die Reden der Menschen in meinem Innern, daß sie Götterspeisen genießen, und geben sich das Ansehen, daß sie seine Lieblings-thiere sind.

⁴ Ozar Nechmad: Briefe und Abhandlungen jüdischer Literatur betreffend; herausgegeben von Ignaz Blumenfeld: Dritter Jahrgang, Wien, 1860, pp. 15-25.

whose name did originally appear in the book; that the contemporary sages, recognising this trick, and knowing the real author, erased the name Solomon, put in the proper name, Coheleth, and left the words "son of David, king in Jerusalem" to brand the impostor; for every one knew the mean position of Coheleth, and by declaring himself to be king, and son of David, he would be denounced as a madman. All this, however, was forgotten in the course of time. And when the later sages found this book, purporting to be the composition of the royal son of David, and saw that it contained infidel sentiments, being unable to prevail with the majority of their colleagues to exclude it from the canon, they, in their anxiety to redeem the character of Solomon, and the sacred Scripture, from the charge of heresy, added three half verses thoroughly orthodox, viz., וְדַע עַל-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים יְבִיאֲךָ הָאֱלֹהִים בְּמִשְׁפָּט, *and know that for all this God will bring thee into judgment* (xi. 6, b); וְזָכֵר אֶת-בּוֹרְאֶיךָ, *and remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth* (xii. 1, a); and וְהָרוּחַ תָּשׁוּב אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַנָּה, *and the spirit shall return to God who gave it* (xii. 8, b); the first addition of *eight* words, the second of *five*, and the third of *six*, making in all *nineteen* words; as הָאֱלֹהִים, however, occurs twice, it must only be taken for one word, hence *eighteen* only remain; and these are י"ח מלין תקון סופרים, mentioned in the Talmud (Shabbath, 97, a), of which no one ever knew the meaning till Professor Luzzatto thus identified them with the interpolations before us!

This is an epitome of a somewhat extensive Introduction, written in Hebrew by this master of the Hebrew language. The Professor, however, tells us, in a letter to the editor of this Annual, that he thinks better of Coheleth in his advanced years; but what his better thoughts are he does not condescend to say.¹

¹ ואחזה דע לך וידעו כל קוראי אצריך. כי לא ככל מחשבותי או מחשבותי עתה. ויש בפירושי זה כמה דברים שאינם עוד נכונים בעיני ויש בו גם כן דברים שאני מסופק בהם: יורד כלל מיעוט ספר קהלה נראה בעיני אחר בואי בימים. והרני יותר מכאן שהיתה בימי חרפי

Other Jewish commentaries, not mentioned in this sketch, will be found in the Appendix. We now proceed to —

B. CHRISTIAN EXPOSITIONS.

In the early part of the Christian era Coheleth seems not to have been in great favour with the Fathers of the Church, judging from the general silence which prevails about it in the first, second, and a part of the third centuries. This is rather ominous, as we should have expected that, from its shewing the emptiness of all earthly things, this book would be welcomed by the suffering followers of Christ, who had to lose all for their Master's sake, and to take up their cross and follow Him. Whether this silence is owing to the fact that Coheleth is nowhere quoted in the New Testament, or to the doubts which existed in the minds of some respecting its canonicity, or to some other cause, it is not easy to divine.

210–270. — However, in the first half of the third century, the wonder-working Gregory (Thaumaturgus), who was born at Neocæsareia, in Cappadocia, at the beginning of the third century, and died in 270, wrote a short metaphrase of Coheleth.¹ Considering that he was the pupil and convert of Origen, the father of allegorical interpretation in the Greek Church, we are astonished to find such a comparatively simple paraphrase. According to Thaumaturgus, *the design of the Preacher is to shew that all the affairs and pursuits of man which are undertaken in human things are vain and useless, in order to lead us to the contemplation of heavenly things*. Like the Midrash,² Thaumaturgus regards the book as prophetic: "Solomon," says he, "son of David, king and prophet, also the most distinguished of all men, and the wisest prophet." The following is a specimen of his mode of paraphrasing: —

Chap. i. 8. *All things, &c.* — The things which man contemplates, his pursuits as well as his words, have neither measure nor end. There is

¹ Metaphrasis in Ecclesiast., in his works edited by Gerardus Vossius, Leipzig, 1004, 4to; or in Gallandii Biblioth. Patrum, Paris, 1788, tom. iii.

² Vide *supra*, p. 37.

indeed a large supply of their words, but there is no fruit from their endless talk, which is replete with error.

9, 10. *What, &c.* — What is it that is new which has not already been found by experience, provided it were remarkable and worthy of record? and there is nothing new and fresh, and unknown to the ancients.

11. *There is no remembrance, &c.* — As the past is buried in oblivion, so the present things will in the process of time sink into oblivion to a future generation.

12. *I, the Preacher, &c.* — Nor do I now, speaking as Preacher, utter these words without consideration; but I, to whose honour has been entrusted the sovereignty of the Jews, have diligently and accurately examined and weighed these things.

14. *I have seen all, &c.* — All these inferior things here below are full of a prodigious and execrable spirit, so much so that no man is able to enumerate them, nay rather to contemplate them, so excessive is the absurdity which has taken possession of human affairs.

331–396. — The first attempt to explain this book was made by Gregory, bishop of Nyssa, in Cappadocia, who was born about 331, and died about 396. He wrote a number of homilies on Cobelet, eight of which are extant, comprising the first three chapters, and it need hardly be said that his explanation is allegorical. He maintains that the design of this book is *to elevate the mind above every material object, and to quiet it, so that it may soar above all which seems great and sublime in this world, to that which the perceptions of the senses cannot reach, and to excite in it a longing after the super-sensible.*¹

The following is a specimen of Gregory's exposition:—

Chap. i. 1. *The words of the Preacher, &c.* — Why is this book more than any other called "the words of the Preacher," seeing that Moses and the Prophets were also read in the church and congregation? Because in other books there are many things about wars, cities, countries, and marriages, which are not so profitable to the Church of God, but the doctrine of this book relates to the only canon of ecclesiastical life, for it sets forth those things whereby one may lead an upright and virtuous life.

9. *What is that, &c.* — He refers to the resurrection and the reunion of the body with the soul. Taking, as the basis of his comment, the Septuagint interrogative rendering of this verse viz., *What is that which has been?*

¹ Homil. 1 init. in his works edited by Morell and Grester, 2 vols., Paris, 1615–1618, reprinted in 1638.

reply, *That which is to be, and What is that which has been done?* reply, *That which shall be done*, Gregory remarks: Now, what does this interrogation mean when from what we have been told, viz., that all things are vanity, we might object, if all things be vanity, it is evident that there could never have been any of those things which have existed, for that which is vain cannot exist at all; moreover, what cannot exist, no one would speak about, when considering those things which have existed? Accordingly, if these things do not exist, tell me what is that which has been, or how does it continue to exist? To this question I reply, briefly, Do you wish to know "what is that which has been?" consider what is that which shall be and you will know it; reflect what you shall be who have elevated yourself by a life of virtue, if you have moulded your life in all good impressions; if you have been removed from all the pollutions of vice; if you have purged your nature from natural impurities, consider, I repeat, what you shall be when you have thus been adorned, and with what beauty you shall invest yourself if you can comprehend these things by reason. You see then the meaning of "what is that which has been?" namely from the first, that which has been formed after the image and likeness of God. And where now (I speak to him who teaches these things) is that which has existed in times past, and will again exist in the future, but does not exist now? He who teaches these sublime things replies that the present things have been called vanity, because these sublime things are not among them.

What is that which has been done? reply, *That which shall be done.* Let no one suppose that there is here a senseless repetition in the words, *has been* (הָיָה), and *has been done* (עָשָׂה), as the former refers to the soul, and the latter to the body; the soul which has always existed (הָיָה) without sin shall be purged and be so again, and the body which was made at first (עָשָׂה) shall be made again.

And there is no new, &c. — Since the resurrection is nothing but a restoration of the pristine state and condition.

10. *Behold this is new, &c.* — What has been said he endeavours to confirm by the words immediately following; if anything really exists now, it is that which has existed in the ages before us, as the passage declares it; but wonder not if the things which have existed are forgotten, for the things which are now will one day also be buried in oblivion.

11. *There is no remembrance, &c.* — Just as we have now no remembrance of the happiness in which man was created, so in the resurrection there will be no remembrance of the misery which man now suffers; for when our nature turned to sin, a forgetfulness of good things came upon us, but when we shall return to goodness, evils shall be buried in oblivion.

338. — Shortly after the appearance of Gregory's Homilies in the Greek Church, St. Jerome, the father of allegorical interpretation in the Latin Church, wrote an elaborate commentary

upon this book, with the express purpose of inducing St. Blesilla, a Roman young lady, to lead a monastic life. Accordingly, he maintains that the design of Coheleth is, *to shew the utter vanity of every sublunary enjoyment, and hence the necessity of betaking oneself to an ascetic life, devoted entirely to the service of God.* It is almost superfluous to say that St. Jerome explained the book allegorically. The following is a specimen of his mode of interpretation.

Chap. iv. 8. *There is one, &c.* — This is Christ, for he is one, and there is not a second, for he came to save the world without any companion; and though there be many sons of God, many who, by adoption, are called the brethren of Christ, yet there was none so worthy as to be joined with him in this work. Of his labour for our sins and sufferings for us there is no end; man's understanding cannot comprehend the greatness thereof.

The eye is not satisfied, &c. — Christ is always desiring and seeking our salvation, nor does he say, "For whom do I labour?" for though we despise his love, and refuse his mercies, he still labours to bring us to repentance, in order to win us to himself.

9. *Better two than one, &c.* — For it is better to have Christ dwelling in us than to be alone, open to the snares of the enemy.

10. *If one falls, &c.* — Christ raises him up who is a partaker of Him; but woe to him who when he falls has not Christ in him to raise him up again.

But one alone, &c. — Unless Christ sleeps and rests with us in death, we shall never be able to receive the glow of everlasting life.

11. *If two lie together, &c.* — If any one should be dissolved by death and lie in the grave, yet if he has Christ with him he shall be warmed, and, being quickened, shall quickly live again.

12. *And if one, &c.* — If the devil, assailing man as a stronger, shall prevail against him, he shall stand, when Christ shall stand for him as his fellow.

Before such a mode of interpretation all difficulties disappear, and the most heterodox sentiments are easily converted into thoroughly orthodox admonitions. In most instances this Rabbi of the Christian Church had nothing to do but to Christianise the allegories of the Rabbins of the Jewish Church. Thus the commendation of eating and drinking, which the Midrash refers to the service of God,¹ St. Jerome explains of THE SACRAMENT

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 36.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER; *bonum est veros cibos et veram sumere potionem, quos de agni carne et sanguine in divinis voluminibus invenimus.* He also tried to get over the inconvenient passages, by putting them into the mouths of sceptics and opponents to the truth, whom he introduces as speaking¹ — a scheme which has been adopted by subsequent expositors.

380. — It is not to be wondered at that some who adopted the view propounded by St. Jerome, viz., that this book teaches the utter vanity and worthlessness of every earthly pleasure, refused to deduce from it the necessity of leading an ascetic and monastic life, regarding such a doctrine as contrary to the goodness and beneficence of the Creator, and rejected the book as Epicurean and uncanonical. Hence we find that Philastrius, bishop of Brescia, who wrote a catalogue of heretics and heresies about the year 380, refers to those *who reject many things in the Old Testament, and among these the book of Ecclesiastes, because they read in it that everything under heaven is vanity of vanities, and because Ecclesiastes advises every one to eat and drink, and indulge in pleasures.*

The prelate's reply to these two objections is rather remarkable, and shews how easily heretics were disposed of in those days. To the charge, that this book denounces all the creatures of God as vain and worthless, Philastrius replies that they are here so described, *in comparison with the future glory of believers in Christ.* As to the second objection, namely, that we are here recommended to indulge in eating and drinking, the bishop submits that Solomon *speaks of spiritual food*, of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as St. Jerome explained it, respecting which the Prophet said, "Taste and see that the Lord is good."²

¹ *Et hæc inquit aliquis loquentur Epicurus, et Arrippus, et Cyrenaici, ix. 7, 8.*

² *Si dixit, vanitas vanitatis est, quæ in sæculo sunt, hæc utique transeuntia prædicavit propter futuram illam gloriam eminentem et perpetuam, ut ait apostolus; transit enim figura hujus mundi et gloria. Si autem figura et vita et honor et dignitas mundi istius cessabunt et destruentur, illa quippe erit desideranda cœlestis et angelica dignitas, quæ incorporatione ac passione et resurrec-*

333 or 40-397 — The comparatively few heretics who urged their reasons against the inspiration of Coheleth, made no impression upon such a man as the eloquent St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, who was born in 333 or 340 at Augusta Trevirorum (Treves), and died in his bishopric in 397. From his great fondness of celibacy and monasticism, in commendation of which he wrote several treatises, and from the ascetic mode of his life, we are quite prepared to find that this book formed St. Ambrose's armoury, supplying him with abundant weapons to defend the nothingness of all earthly enjoyments. Coheleth is therefore largely quoted by our ascetic Father in his various productions. The following is a specimen of his exposition:—

Chap. iv. 8. *There is one, &c.* — Who is this but He of whom it is said, Your Master is one in heaven? (Matt. xxiii. 8). He is not the second, because He is the first; He has not a second, because He alone is without sin; He alone is without a helper.¹

9. *Better two, &c.* — Does Christ labour? He does labour, but it is in us; He labours by making us labour, by supporting us in our labour; and He that labours in us gives us a reward for our labours.

10. *If one falls, &c.* — Christ did not fall, but cast Himself down; He humbled Himself that He might make us his followers. He will raise us up, because when He was down he raised Himself up.

11. *If two lie together, &c.* — We are dead with Christ, and therefore live with Him; Christ is dead with us that He may heat us; and he who dies in Christ, being warmed by Christ, receives the vapour of life and resurrection.

12. *Two are better than one.* — That thou mayest know that this is spoken in mystery, and not of the number two being better than one, he added a mystical thing, namely, a threefold cord is not easily broken; for three which are not compounded are not broken, and the Trinity which is of an uncompounded nature cannot be divided, because God who is one and simple, is whatsoever is.²

15. *I saw all the living, &c.* — Christ is the second young man; he is the first according to his dignity, none being before him; but the second

tione quippe est Christi credentibus adventura, quæ non temporalis, carnalis ac caduca. . . . Non de hac esca solum carnali dicebat . . . sed diversam escam gloriamque sanctorum hominem nuntiabat. . . . De qua esca ait et Propheta: Gustate et videte, quia suavis est Dominus. Bibl. Patr., tom. iv., p. 42.

¹ De Virgin., c. 10.

² Cohorta ad Clericos.

according to the flesh, because the second Adam. Moreover, I say I not only read that he is the second, but that he is the last; he is both the first and the last: he is the first, because through him are all things; the last, because through him shall be the resurrection.¹

354-430. — St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, who was born in 354, at Tagaste, an inland town in Numidia, like his tutor and father in God, St. Ambrose, explains this book allegorically. "*Having discovered the vanity of this world, the wisest of men wrote the whole of this book for nothing else but that we might discern that life which is not vanity under the sun, but real under Him who made the sun.*"²

The following is a specimen of St. Augustine's exposition:—

ii. 24. *There is nothing better for man but to eat, &c.* — We cannot understand this better than as referring to the partaking of that table, which our Priest after the order of Melchizedek has instituted for us in the New Testament. For this sacrifice succeeded all the Old Testament sacrifices, which were only shadows of good things to come; as we hear our Saviour speaking prophetically in the fortieth Psalm, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, but a body hast thou prepared me." For his body is offered and sacrificed now, instead of all other offerings and sacrifices. That Ecclesiastes cannot mean by eating and drinking, which he so often recommends, carnal pleasure, is sufficiently evident from the passage, where he says, "it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting."

x. 16. *Woe to thee, O land, &c.* — Ecclesiastes calls the devil a child, because of his foolishness, and pride, temerity, and petulance, and other vices incident to childhood; but Christ he calls the son of the great, of the holy patriarchs belonging to the free city, because he descended from them according to the flesh.³

550. — It is quite a relief to the monotony of patristic exposition to find Olympiodorus, surnamed Diaconus, or Monachus, who lived in the middle of the sixth century, and sustained the office of Diaconus in Alexandria, advance a new theory, viz., *that Solomon treats in this book upon natural things, and thus designs it to be a treatise on natural philosophy, which would*

¹ De Virgin., c. 12.

² De civit. Dei, xx., c. 3.

³ De civit. Dei, xvii., c. 20.

otherwise be wanting in the Sacred Scriptures, and intersperses this treatise with a few moral sentences and maxims. As to the objectionable passages, Olympiodorus maintains that Solomon does not speak his own mind, but acts the part of one who is astonished at seeing what transpires in the world.¹

787. — Elias of Crete, supposed to have been the metropolitan of Crete who took part in the second General Council of Nicæa, A.D. 787, treats of Ecclesiastes in his commentaries on the Orations of Gregory Nazianzen. He entirely espouses the view of Gregory, bishop of Nyssa, whose very words he repeats, viz., that "*this book is emphatically called Ecclesiastes, because its doctrine relates to the only canon of ecclesiastical life, truly setting forth those things through which we may be able to realise a life combined with virtue. For the things which are here set forth tend to make the mind live above the senses, and raise itself to those things which are nobler than sense and desire,*" &c. To this Elias adds, that —

Ecclesiastes advises us not to waste our admiration on any of the things here below, since all things in nature end in vanity; no remains are left of them when they go. Just as they who write upon the water, though they labour to form signs of letters upon the aqueous element, leave no impression behind, so is every earthly pleasure, for no sooner is the act over than the pleasure is gone, and leaves no trace behind. Ecclesiastes again and again recurs to this subject, that, by repeatedly speaking upon the same things, he may more effectually place before our eyes the vanity of the things of human life, and shew that this vanity is not confined to the visible part of these things, but is altogether inherent in them. Having shewn the vanity of all things, Ecclesiastes adds that this condition of things, and the misery of life, are not to be ascribed to God, but to man's wilful violation of God's commandments.²

This view was adopted by all the writers of the middle ages, and received a freshness from the mystical and metaphysical treatment of the scholastics, worthy of their hair-splitting intellects.

¹ Bibl. Patr., tom. xiii., p. 602.

² Opera Gregory Nazianzen, Paris, 1630, p. 575.

1096 – 1140. — Thus Hugo of St. Victor¹ says, that the design of this book is to persuade us to despise the world, by shewing us the vanity of all earthly things. The vain things discussed by Ecclesiastes are reduced to three classes: — 1. Things made for man; 2. Things made by man; and 3. Things made in man. In the things made for man, there is the vanity of mutability; in the things made by man, there is the vanity of curiosity; and in the things made in man, there is the vanity of mortality.²

Having given the three titles of the author (viz., Preacher, Son of David, and King,) in the first verse, Hugo maintains that Solomon gives the sum of these three parts of his book in verses 2, 3, and 4. In verse 2, the vanity of mutability is maintained, which is discussed in the first part of the book, viz., chap. i. 5–11; verse 3 mentions the vanity of curiosity, which is discussed in the second part, viz., chap. i. 12 – xi. 10; and verse 4 mentions the vanity of mortality, which is discussed in the third part of the book, viz., chap. xii. 1–14.

The first vanity is natural, and becoming the nature of worldly things; the second is sinful, because perverse and froward; the third is penal and miserable. The first is the occasion of sin, the second is sin, and the third is the punishment of sin.³

The following is a specimen of his mode of exposition: —

Chap. iii. 5. *There is a time to cast away stones.* — If we regard stones as the brave deeds of virtue, the casting away of stones is the multiplication of

¹ Hugo of St. Victor was born in 1096, either at Ypres, in the Netherlands, or in Lower Saxony, and became an Augustinian canon in the monastery of St. Victor, at Paris, where he died in 1140, aged forty-four. His works were printed in 3 vols. fol., Rouen, 1648. An interesting sketch of his life is given in Herzog, Real-Encyclopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche, vol. vi., pp. 307–315.

² Ostendit secundum triplicem vanitatem, omnia esse vanitati subjecta, id est caduca, transitoria, videlicet et quæ propter homines facta sunt et quæ ab hominibus facta sunt et quæ in hominibus facta sunt. In his, quæ propter homines facta sunt, vanitas est mutabilitatis. In his, quæ ab hominibus facta sunt, vanitas est curiositatis. In his, quæ in hominibus facta sunt, vanitas mortalitatis.

³ Prima vanitas naturalis est, et apta sive congrua; secunda vanitas culpabilis est, quia perversa: tertia vanitas pœnalis et misera. Prima causa est peccati: secunda peccatum: tertia pœna peccati.

good works. *To gather stones* is, after laborious effort, to gain the fruit of good works. There is a time therefore for both casting away and gathering stones, because a man ought first to discipline himself in the anxieties of active life, that he may afterwards discern the fruit of his works in the pleasure of contemplation.

1096–1164.—The celebrated Peter Lombard¹ is by no means behind his contemporary, Hugo of St. Victor, in the allegorising of this book, as will be seen from the following specimen:—

Chap. xii. 5. *The almond, &c.*—Following the Vulgate's rendering of this verse, viz., *The almond tree shall flourish, the grasshopper shall be made fat, and the caper shall be destroyed*, this scholastic remarks, The almond tree is Christ. There are three things in the almond, viz., the rind, the shell, and the kernel; and Christ consists of three substances—the flesh corresponding with the rind, the mind with the shell, the divinity with the kernel. The rind is bitter, the shell is strong, the kernel is sweet. But *when shall the almond flower?* In the resurrection, for it seemed dead and dry in His passion and death. As the almond flowered, so the grasshopper fattens, i. e., the Gentiles, and the caper bush is scattered, i. e., the Jewish people. By the grasshopper, not without cause, are the Gentiles indicated; for, as the grasshopper moves by leaps, nor can it move without leaping, so the Gentiles moved after Zion by leaps. But the caper bush is scattered, because the barren brought forth most, &c.—Isa. liv. 1.

1100–1173.—Richard of St. Victor,² the *Coryphæus* of the *mystics*, fully sustains this reputation by his treatment of this book. The following is a specimen of it:—

Chap. i. 7.—*All the rivers flow into the sea, &c.*—We know that the water of rivers is sweet, and that of the sea is bitter. What, then, is it for rivers to run into the sea, but for all fleshly passions to end in bitterness? *Therefore* all rivers run into the sea, because the issue of joy is sorrow. All sweet waters are changed into bitter in the sea, because laughter is mingled with grief.

¹ Peter Lombard was born about 1096, at a village near Novaria, in Lombardy, hence his surname Lombard; went to France to study theology, was made Professor of Divinity in 1141, and Bishop of Paris in 1150, where he died in 1164. For a sketch of his Life see Herzog, vol. viii., pp. 466–476.

² Richard of St. Victor was born about 1100, in Scotland, went to Paris to prosecute his studies, became first a canon and then prior of St. Victor, near the walls of Paris, where he died in 1173. His works were published in 2 vols. fol., Rouen, 1650. Comp. Herzog, vol. xiii., pp. 19–22.

Galfrid, another scholastic of this period, thus expatiates upon—

i. 5.—*The sun also ariseth, &c.*—This indicates mystically the Divine Saviour. The true Sun of Righteousness “arose” on the night of his nativity, and “set” in his passion, and “hastened to the place whence he arose” on the day of his ascension, &c.¹

1221–1274.—Bonaventura,² who also maintains that *this book describes the vanity of earthly things, to teach thereby contempt for the world*, propounds this view in a far more speculative manner than any of the schoolmen. As to the objection, that the creatures of God, which he himself pronounced “very good” (Gen. i. 31), and designed for a certain end, cannot be characterised as vain, Bonaventura replies that they are not called vain because they are deficient in goodness or order, but because they are wanting in unchangeableness. Therefore, although everything is vanity, yet it is not so vain but it has some reality and good. Now, as the world is vain because it yields no permanent support, and God alone possesses intransmutable repose (*intransmutabilitatis quietem*), therefore true life and happiness can be found in God only.³

1270–1340.—With Nicholas de Lyra, forerunner of the Reformation, a new era begins in Biblical exegesis. Unlike the rest of the schoolmen, who knew little of Greek and nothing of

¹ The above specimens of scholastic interpretation are selected from *Radus Ascensius, Allegoriarum Bibliorum*, 1520, which contains expositions of thirty of the most distinguished schoolmen, arranged in the order of the books of the Bible. It is to be regretted that this comprehensive and most interesting manual of mediæval exposition has become so very scarce.

² Bonaventura is the ecclesiastical name of the celebrated Franciscan, Fidenza, who was born at Bognarea, in Tuscany, in 1221, and died Bishop of Albano, in 1274. He was seized with a dangerous illness when four years old, from which he recovered through the intercession of St. Francis, to whose prayers his mother recommended him. This great saint, on beholding the convalescent Fidenza, exclaimed, *O buona ventura*, hence his name *Bonaventura*. See the sketch of his life in Herzog, vol. ii., pp. 290–294.

³ *Quod obijcitur, quod creaturæ non sunt vanæ, quia valde bonæ et in finem ordinate, solvendum, quod non dicuntur vanæ per defectum boni, vel ordinis, sed per defectum esse incommutabilis et sic omnis creatura est vana nec ita vana, quin habeat veritatem et bonitatem. Expositio in librum Ecclesiast. Off., tom. i., p. 204, seq., Mogunt., 1609.*

Hebrew, De Lyra, who was born a Jew, brought to his work a refined mind, well stored, both with his vernacular Hebrew and a large acquaintance with Greek. He could therefore no more follow the frivolities and cavilings of his fellow-expositors; but, whilst admitting the four modes of interpretation beautifully expressed in the rule —

Litera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,
Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia:

*The literal teaches the bearing, the allegorical what to believe;
The moral what to do, the anagogia where to go,*

he maintains that the literal meaning must be thoroughly understood before we can comprehend the spiritual, *inasmuch as all mystical exposition presupposes a literal sense as its foundation. To those who are desirous of advancing in the study of the Sacred Scriptures, it is therefore necessary to begin with the understanding of the literal meaning, especially as from the literal sense only, and not from the mystical, can we derive arguments or clear up difficulties.*¹ Acting upon such a rational rule of interpretation, and availing himself of all that was valuable in the Jewish expositors, we do not wonder that he produced such a beautiful commentary upon the Bible,² for which he obtained the title, *Doctor planus et utilis*, and gave a new tone to Biblical exegesis.

As to his view on Coheleth, though he has not fully hit upon its design, yet he has come nearer to it than any of his predecessors, *inasmuch as he maintains that as mankind look for happiness in different directions, — wealth, pleasure, honour, knowledge, &c., — Solomon, whose wisdom was formed in different ways, sets himself to shew that felicity consists in none of these, but in the fear of God.*

¹ Omnes expositiones mysticæ præsupponunt sensum literalem tanquam fundamentum . . . ideo volentibus proficere in studio Sacræ Scripturæ necessarium est incipere ab intellectu sensus literalis, maxime cum ex solo sensu literali et non ex mysticis possit argumentum fieri ad probationem vel declarationem alicuius dubii.

² Biblia sacra latina, cum postillis, Venice, 1480, 4 vols. folio; the edition we have used.

He divides the book into two parts: in the first part (chap. i. 2 – vii. 12), Solomon descants *on the false sources of happiness*; and in the second part (chap. vii. 1 – xii. 14), which has two sections, he treats *upon true happiness*, shewing that it consists *objectively* in God alone; *formally* (formaliter) in the clear vision and enjoyment of God in meritorious works; to which Solomon urges us, on to the end of chap. xi., and persuades us to *promptitude* in chap. xii.

How much the Reformation and the Reformers owe to this converted Jew, may be seen from the well-known Roman Catholic saying —

Si Lyra non lyrasset,
Lutheris non saltasset.

*If Lyra had not played profanation,
Luther would not have danced the Reformation.*

1528. — The new path thus opened by De Lyra was at last crowded by a host of Reformers, who, though discarding all the metaphysical conceits of the schoolmen, were too absorbed in the doctrines of our utter inability to do anything good, of the insufficiency of the law, and justification by faith alone, to see anything else in this book. Thus John Brentius, the Suabian Reformer, who wrote the first Protestant commentary on Coheleth,¹ maintains *that this book is, so to speak, an appendix to the Law of Moses. Now the Law teaches that man of himself is utterly unable to act virtuously, and that the more he exerts himself to acquire righteousness by his own works and thoughts, the more he fails in the attempt.* WITH THIS DOCTRINE THIS LITTLE BOOK PERFECTLY AGREES, AND TEACHES THAT ALL THE POWER OF MEN, THEIR WISDOM, REASONING, AND DESIGNS, GRIEVOUSLY DEVIATE FROM THE NATURAL EMPLOYMENT OF CREATED BEINGS; FORSOOTH THERE IS NOT ONE WHO, IF LEFT TO HIMSELF, COULD BOAST OF BEING ABLE, IN THE SMALLEST DEGREE, EITHER TO ACQUIRE

¹ Ecclesiastes Salomonis, cum commentariis, juxta piis adque eruditissimis Johannis Brentii, Haganoæ, 1528.

RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD, OR TO LIVE IN HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS RELATION WITH HIS FELLOW-CREATURES.¹

There is, however, a striking feature introduced by Brentius into the practical bearing of this book, which has been entirely overlooked by his predecessors. Whilst all the Fathers and Schoolmen maintain that the tendency of Coheleth is to make us *despise* every earthly pleasure, the Suabian Reformer submits that it teaches man piously and cheerfully to *enjoy* the good creatures of God.

1532. — This idea is still more fully developed by Luther, who declares that *Solomon condemns the evil lust, and not the creatures themselves*; since he says himself, respecting the use of the creatures, that —

There is nothing better than to be cheerful, and enjoy one's life; to eat, drink, and delight in one's employment; he would therefore contradict himself, if he also condemned the things themselves, and not rather the abuse of them, which consists in the human passions. Some foolish persons, not understanding these things, have absurdly taught contempt for and flight from the world, and have committed many foolish things themselves; as we read in the lives of the Fathers that there were some who even shut themselves up from ever seeing the sun; *reminding us of the passage where Solomon condemns him who eats all his days in darkness* (well they deserve to have their eyes put out), and for the sake of religion lived in the most sordid plight; whereas, living above the world is not living out of the world.²

Luther maintains that *the design of this book is to teach us to use with grateful hearts the things present, and the creatures of God which are bountifully bestowed upon us by the blessing of God, without anxiety about future temporal blessings; to have a quiet and tranquil heart, and a mind full of cheerfulness and contentment with the will and dealings of God.*³

¹ Ad hanc rationem libellus iste accedit et docet, omnium hominum vires, sapientiam, rationem atque consilia a genuino creaturarum usu fæde aberrare ac retrocedere, nimirum, ne quisque sit, qui gloriatur ac cristas erigat, se posse vel quidque sibi relictus coram Deo sive ad justitiam parandam sive ad creaturas felici atque prospero exitu tractandas. Proœmion, p. 11, b.

² Ecclesiastes Salomonis cum annotationibus Martin. Lutherus, Vitemberg, 1532. See the Preface.

³ Est status et consilium hujus libelli erudire nos, ut cum gratiarum actione

The sagacious Reformer has not only done much towards the better understanding of the *true design* of Coheleth, but has also discovered, by sheer penetration, without possessing any critical knowledge of the original, that Solomon could not have been the author of this book. He says, in his Table Talk, *This book wants more completeness; it is too abrupt. . . . Solomon himself has not written the book of Ecclesiastes, it was compiled by Sirach at the time of the Maccabees. . . . It is like the Talmud, made up of many books, which perhaps belonged to the library of King Ptolemy Euergetes in Egypt.*¹

1556. — Melancthon succeeded still more in shewing the true scope of Coheleth. According to him, *the design of the book is to propound the doctrine of an overruling Providence, the necessity of obedience and submission, the doctrine of a future judgment, and the importance of attending to our calling.*²

As to the utility of the book, he remarks that —

It confirms us in the belief of an overruling Providence, and shews us that we are to be submissive in every station of life, and perform the duties of our calling; that we should cling to the consolations he propounded, notwithstanding the many difficulties we have to encounter; that we should know that to follow our calling is pleasing to God; that He is the Ruler of his Church; that He wishes us to invoke his aid; that He will assuredly help those who faithfully serve Him in their calling; and that His Church will finally pass into eternal intercourse with the Deity, when God will be all in all. If we believe this, we shall submit to God, and act in accordance with His will; we shall neither repine at nor despise the duties of our calling, nor fall blindly into contempt of God, after the manner of the Epicureans.

utamur rebus præsentibus et creaturis Dei, quæ nobis Dei benedictione largiter dantur et donata sunt, sine solitudine futurorum, tantum ut tranquillum et quietum cor habeamus et animum gaudii plenum contenti scilicet verbo et opere Dei.

¹ Dies Buch sollte völliger sein, ihm ist zu viel abgebrochen. . . . So hat Salomo selbst das Buch, den Prediger, nicht geschrieben, sondern es ist zur Zeit der Maccabäer von Sirach gemacht. . . . Dazu so ist's wie ein Talmud aus vielen Büchern zusammengezogen, vielleicht aus der Library des Königs Ptolemäus Euergetes in Aegypten. Table Talk, p. 400 and 401, Förstermann and Birdseil's edition.

² Enarratio concionum libri Salomonis cui titulus est Ecclesiastes, secunda editio, Vitemberg, 1556.

1580. — Thomas Cartwright is, to my knowledge, the first English Protestant who wrote on Coheleth.¹ This celebrated Puritan maintains that Solomon—who was called Coheleth (i.e., the reunited or gathered one), because he was reunited with the Church from whence he had been expelled, in consequence of his grievous sins—wrote this book to give a divine solution of the problem respecting the greatest good for man. “What in many books of the Sacred Scriptures is referred to occasionally and incidentally, the Preacher discusses through an entire book, and, discussing, settles it definitely. The method which this Prophet pursues in his enquiry is to refute the unsubstantial happiness—the mark of the foolish, of the besotted, and of the ignorant—and then vividly to describe the true and genuine happiness, as identified with piety towards God, and with the fruits of rectitude towards man.”² “The prophets of God imitate the thrifty and skilful farmer, who first weeds out the thorns, and uproots other baneful growths, before he commits the good seed to the ground.”³

1588. — The learned Whitaker, in defending this book, espoused the patristic view, viz., that Solomon exhorts men, with a divine eloquence, to despise and condemn the world.⁴

1597. — The next English production is a poetical paraphrase of Ecclesiastes, written by Henry Lock, and dedicated to Queen Elizabeth.⁵ Lock, like Cartwright, regards the book as a treatise on the highest good. SOLOMON, the King of Peace;

¹ Metaphrasis et Homiliæ in Librum Solomonis, quis inscribitur Ecclesiastes. He wrote this commentary towards the end of his life, and it was published after his death in Amsterdam, 1647.

² Lectori.

³ Homiliæ, p. 452.

⁴ A Disputation on Holy Scripture against Papists, by William Whitaker, D.D. The Parker Society's edition, pp. 31, 32.

⁵ Ecclesiastes, otherwise called the Preacher, containing Solomon's sermons, or commentaries (as it may probably be called), upon the forty-ninth Psalm of David his father, compendiously abridged, and also paraphrastically dilated in English Poesie, according to the analogy of Scripture and consent of the most approved writers thereof, by H. L., Gentleman. London, printed by Richard Field, dwelling in the Blackfriars, near Ludgate, 1597.

YEDIDA, the Beloved of God; ECCLESIASTES, the Preacher, who in his Proverbs instructed thee as a child to a civil and honest life, in this work instructeth thy manly thoughts to the inquisition of the highest good, to the end that by his last song of heavenly love thy ripened thoughts might be inflamed with that glorious bridegroom, Christ Jesus.

As this paraphrase is one of the scarcest books in our language, we give the whole introduction of this great curiosity, and a specimen of the paraphrase.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER,

It is the most fit subject for the nobility of man's spirit to meditate of felicity, and a true saying of Aristotle, that *omnia appetunt bonum*. Yea, the common practice of our high-minded age is to strive for the same in the superlative degree. But so foolish and new-fangled are our desires, that, wishing we wot not what, and seeking it we know not how nor where, we come all far short of the same, and some run headlong to the despised contrary (looking for it on earth), and, thereby groping for it to their graves, they are there cut off of their hopes, and die discontented with their haps. Whereas, if they acknowledged it to be the tree of life, planted in the heavenly paradise, they would less labour their bodies for attaining these transitory shadows of pleasures, and more exercise the faculties of the soul for achieving the same, so much the more despising these instable and imperfect happinesses of this life, as they found their foolish affections of the flesh (doting on thee) to work neglect of the nutriment of their soul, and slackens in the constant travail in religion and virtue (which is requisite for the long journey we have to pass through life and death thereunto). But this having been the sickness of all ages, and specially of the Jews in Solomon's time, (which induced him, as it should appear, to take so great pains in removing them from that error,) I the less marvel that our age, flourishing in the pride of like long peace and plenty, under her Majesty's most happy reign, be also sorted with the world as they were, dreaming of that perfection and perpetuity here, which God by nature hath denied unto us, and but by her Highness' reign we could hope for. And since it is the duty of every part and member of the body to join in the assistance and care of the whole, if any particular of it should suffer, I have in a dutiful compassion of this common calamity endeavoured to seek forth some mithridate for this poison, by which so many perish, and have here brought thee a dose of the wisest Physician's composition that ever had practice of that case—who did not (for the experiment of his potion's quality) first kill many patients in trial thereof, but, applying it to his own wound first,

dares confidently write *probatum est*, and, by the seal of the Holy Spirit and consent of the Church, doth warrant thee to taste of the same. It is a receipt so oldly composed, perhaps, that thou respectest it the less, or of so small price that thou shamest to take it; or, perhaps, knowing the bitterness of the taste, thou hast as lieve continue sick as to try it. But deceive not thyself, it is not the nature of the perfectest drugs, which with age increase in strength, of the kind of *Sibillas'* works, which, refused, grow higher prized; and of the herb called woodrose, which, only handled, had an evil smell, but, more forcibly rubbed, yieldeth sweet savour. Receive it therefore as confidently as he assured it, and as kindly as I intend it — who, in respect that the obscurity of many places, the contrariety (as at first would appear) of some points, and strange dependency of the whole together, have done my careful and studious endeavour (by consideration and imitation of the best interpreters thereof) to explain the sense, accord the different plans, to join by probable connection the whole discourse together; which (as well to distinguish the several arguments as to vary the verse, and please the reader) I have not altogether unfitly distributed into three sermons, each one containing four chapters a-piece. The first especially shewing the vain opinion of felicity, which is not in earth to be found. The second pointing more directly (by the lawful use of this life) the true way unto her. The last teaching her residence to be in heaven, and persuading the speedy pursuit of her favour. And that you might truly consider of the carriage of the matter, according to the scope of the text, I have caused the same to be quoted in the margin, reducing for memory's sake into two abstract lines of verse, set in the top of every leaf, the substance of every page's contents, which afterwards as thou seest is paraphrastically dilated page by page, in the plainest form I can devise. Who, in respect of the gravity of the argument, did restrain my pen from the helps of much profane learning, and in consideration of the antiquity of the work, and majesty of the author, could not (without great indecency) have used the authorities of men, or of so late times (as since the learnings flourished, whence we now receive our common light). Like naked truth, therefore, I pray thee receive it, for its own if not my sake, and in anything I seem to swerve from thy conceit of many points, I pray thee confer further therein with *D. Gregorius, Neocesariensis Epist. Olimpiodorus; D. Salonijs Epist. Viennensis; Theod. Bezu; John Serranus; Anth. Corranus; Tremelius; all interpreters and paraphrasers in prose upon this work; and J. Lectius; Ro. Lemmannus; J. Vinismus; reducers thereof into Latin poesie; or any other thou likest better of; so shall my errors be covered or excused; whilst their different forms, distributions of methode and interpretations, will leave thee (I am persuaded) in some points as little satisfied as this my labour shall do — who in some things was forced to digress from them all, when, either too much in one place or too little in another, they followed the form of a paraphrase which they undertook; into which error also it is not unlike but that I have sometimes failed myself, and I doubt not but many things*

more might have been said, and perhaps to more purpose than I have done, but *non omnia possumus omnes*. According to my sufficiency I have discharged myself faithfully unto thee, and therefore I trust (in these days wherein some pernicious, many uncivil, and a swarm of superfluous and unprofitable books pass from the press) it shall not be needful for me to use great insinuation for thy favour, since it lieth not in the bounds of a Preface to prepare a perverse mind, or in the nature of such a work to go a-begging for a grace. I will therefore cut off that labour, and only signify unto thee the excellency of this work, compiled by the wisest man and mightiest king of Israel, even *Solomon*, the King of Peace; *Yedida*, the Beloved of God; *Ecclesiastes*, the Preacher, who in his Proverbs instructed thee as a child to a civil and honest life, in this work instructeth thy manly thoughts to the inquisition of the highest good. To the end that by his last song of heavenly love thy ripened thoughts might be inflamed with that glorious bridegroom, Christ Jesus, to whose holy direction I heartily commend thee.

1. *These sacred words King David's son did preach, who Israel taught,*

1. The words of the Preacher, &c.

2. *All vanity of vanities, he calls, more light than thought.*

1. The heavenly words of Holy David's son,
Who over Israel's race sometimes did reign,
Wherewith to virtue he his subjects wone,
Whilst in Jerusalem he did remain,
And to instruct them thus did not disdain.
Those words, no vain discourse it is I write,
Pen'd by a Prince, as God did them indite.

Strange doctrines, which some paradoxes call,
But yet the quintessence of holy creed,
Lives pure Elixer, which is sought of all,
T' assuage care's corrosives, in heart that breed,
Of happiness the generative feed;
Of moral speculation practice found;
Of constant faith the quiet fruit he found.

The fairest happiness which some propound,
In minds, in bodies, and in fortune's gifts,
(Which all conjoined seldome times are found)
But to a vain conceit the fancy lifts,
And their best sectaries do lose their drifts;

2. Vanity of vanities, saith the, &c.

The crown it is of heaven's most glorious state,
Earth's fruits all vain; care, folly, and debate.

Yea vain, all vain (saith he), man's soul well proves,
 Whoever on earth's spacious orb below
 Hath breath, life, being, sense, or what so moves
 By vegetative kind; or which doth owe
 To nature a declining state to grow.
 Vain in the root, in bud, in flower all vain;
 Vain fruit, whose offsprings vainly vades again.

1605. — "The far-famed Hebraist," Hugh Broughton, published "a Commentary on Coheleth or Ecclesiastes," in 1605, which he "framed for the instruction of Prince Henry our hope."¹ Broughton maintains that "all this book of Coheleth, or Solomon, tendeth to open Nathan's speech (1 Chron. xvii.) touching the eternal throne of David; and all this syllogism ariseth hence by the Jews' grant, in the Chaldee upon this place.

If all things under the sun be subject to extreme vanity, the eternal throne promised unto David must be of another world:

But all things under the sun be subject to extreme vanity:

Therefore this is all the man, to look unto the judgment of God for another world, and unto the throne of the better stay!

The proposition is omitted, as lapped in the prophecy of Nathan closely, and not to be opened directly to the profane, who would contemn all speech of the world to come. And the humble would conceive it."²

It is most unaccountable that this great Hebraist, who boasted that a learned Rabbi, with whom he conversed in Hebrew, said to him —

"Oh that you would set over all your new Testament into such Hebrew as you speak to me! you should turn all our nation,"

should so wofully mistranslate the only quotation he makes from Ibn Ezra, viz., נקרא קהלת כושם החכמה הנקהלה בו, which he renders *he is called Kokeleth*, BY THE TERM OF wisdom, which

¹ A Commentary upon Coheleth or Ecclesiastes, framed for the instruction of Prince Henry our hope, by Hugh Broughton, 1605.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 14.

was gathered in him, not knowing that כושם is a common idiomatic term for *an account of*, i.e., *he is called Coheleth ON ACCOUNT OF the wisdom which was gathered in him*. For the merits of Broughton's translation of Coheleth, we must refer to the commentary, where different renderings are discussed.

About this time Greenham's "brief sum of Ecclesiastes" appeared, which occupies less than a page in the folio editions of his works. Keeping to the old traditional view, this celebrated Puritan maintains that *Solomon became sorrowful of his folly, and being desirous to leave to the world a testimony of his sorrow, he taketh upon him in this book the person of a public penitent, professing it to be a monument of his unwise dealing, and therefore it may be called Solomon's recantations. . . . Solomon sheweth in this book that he proved all, and yet this is his conclusion, that to fear God, in reverent regard to keep his commandments, is all a man can come to, the only way to find peace of conscience, and to assure us of the favour of God.*¹

1606. — Roused by the zeal for Biblical studies which the Reformation had kindled in the Protestant Church, the Jesuits were now determined that they would not be behind their opponents. And it is only justice to say, that, as a repository of patristic and mediæval lore, the commentary of Lorinus² surpasses all that had hitherto been published on Coheleth by Protestants. But though this work, like all others of the same school, is very useful for historical purposes, it contributes little or nothing to critical exposition, as will be seen from the following specimen.

According to Lorinus, *this book lays down a natural discipline, but, at the same time, things empty and vain are therein distinguished from things which are profitable, and admonitions are given to relinquish the one and to pursue the other, that God may*

¹ The works of Richard Greenham, fifth edition, London, 1612, p. 628.

² Joannis Lorini Avenionensis Societatis Jesu, Commentarii in Ecclesiasten. Moguntie, 1607. The edition which I possess is the second edition; the first appeared in Lugd., 1606.

*be feared and the commandments obeyed.*¹ Therefore devotion to the sciences is expressly repudiated in chap. i.; the craving for luxuries, in chap. ii.; the desire of long life, in chap. iii.; the lust of rule, in chap. iv. and part of chap. v.; the greediness after riches, in the latter part of chap. v. and chap. vi.; the art of divination, in chap. vii.; the chase after praise and fame, in the former part of chap. viii.; the hunt after fortune, in the latter part of chap. viii. and beginning of chap. ix.; vigour of body, in the latter part of chap. ix. and chap. x.; a certain kind of youthful indulgence, in chap. xi. and chap. xii.

The following is a specimen of his commentary:—

Chap. iii. 20. *All go, &c.*—The Royal Bible leaves out the word *πορεύονται*. It is retained in all the editions of the Septuagint, and in the Sixtine Manuscripts; also in an old translation, where it is rendered *vadunt*. By the word *place* may be understood *state* and *condition*, and not merely the space containing it. As in Job (vii. 10), "And his own place will know him no more." Sometimes the word seems even to denote *time*, compare "Up to that time (loci) I had told nothing" (Neh. ii. 18).

All are of the dust, &c.—The Chaldee restricts this to *man*. (All the inhabitants of the world have been created of dust, and when dead they shall be turned into dust); but though the Hebrew word *אֶרֶץ* may be rendered in the masculine gender, and thus be understood of men only, yet mention has also been made of beasts. The earth is called by Lucretius and others *the mother of all things*; hence words implying maternal relation are fittingly applied to it. As *παμήτωρ*, *mother of all*; *παντρώς*, *nourisher of all*; *παῖδρα*, *giver of all gifts*; *δημήτηρ*, *great mother*; "Ἐκ γῆς γὰρ δὴ πάντα καὶ εἰς γῆν πάντα τελευτᾷ, *for of the earth all things are, and to the earth all things in the end return*. Indeed, all things made, being compounds, consist for the most part of earth, and are resolved into it especially; to man, however, the term is peculiarly adapted, for he was formed directly by God from the earth. Comp. also xii. 7 of this book, "And the dust return to its own earth, whence it came;" and Genesis iii. 19, "Till thou return to the ground, for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." There is a similar expression, *infra* chap. v. 14. Job evidently speaks of the earth as mother; and this idea is sanctioned by Chrysostom, by St. Thomas, and Gregory on Job; also by Jerome, Cyprian, Gaudentius of Brixia, and Prosper. Job is speaking either of Adam or of the human

¹ *Naturalem disciplinam hic tradi, simul tamen inania ac vana ab utilibus necessariisque secerni, monendo relinquendam vanitatem, et utilia honestaque sectanda, ut timeatur Deus, ejusque mandatis pareatur. Prolegomena, cap. v.*

race universally, which descends from the same original. The story of Brutus is well known, how he obtained the supreme authority in the city, because he kissed his mother the ground; having thus interpreted the oracle from the cave. Similar to this is the answer of the soothsayers respecting the dream of Julius Cæsar. It was customary with the ancients, according to the testimony of Varro, to place the new-born babe instantly on the ground, and to invoke the goddess Ops, who is the earth itself. The same deity was named *Levana*, from lifting up out of the earth, *a levando*; *Fauna*, from favouring, *a favendo*; *Fatua*, from speaking, *a fando*; as if it were not lawful to speak before touching it (*viz.*, the earth), *Maia* too, and *Bona*, and *Magna Mater*. Ecclesiasticus seems to have used this same term in the passage, "There is a heavy yoke on the sons of Adam, from the day of their leaving their mother's womb until the day of their burial in the mother of all" (xi. 1). But the author of the Book of Wisdom also states of himself, "And when I was born I breathed the common air and fell upon the earth, which is of like nature" (vii. 3). Upon this consult our commentary. Hence the Latins speak of the new-born babe falling on the ground, and by lifting up a son denote educating him and adopting him as one's own. Augustine, in addition to many profane writers, mentions a ceremony, in which the infant, after being discharged from the womb, was lifted up naked from the ground. On this point Macrobius is preeminently deserving of perusal; lastly, also, our own Pontanus and Pineda. That same author of the Book of Wisdom calls the first man (*γενεῖα καὶ πρωτόπλαστον*), *earth-born and first framed*; Paul uses the expression *of the earth, earthy*; and the Greek profane writers also use the first epithet, especially the poets; just as the Latins use the terms *earth-born* and *progeny of earth*, when describing the formation of man from the earth. Hear how these have expressed what Ecclesiastes here gives as an apophthegm, Phocylides says:

Σῶμα γὰρ ἐκ γαίης ἔχομεν καὶ πάντες ἐς αὐτὴν
Λύμενοι κόπης ἐσμὲν.

*Our body we derive from the earth, and we all
are resolved into it, and become dust.*

Earth must be restored to earth, says Cicero (Tusc. 3), when repeating the words of Euripides. They commit a very grave error who think that men can spring from the earth without the intercourse of male and female, in the same manner that things spring from putrid matter. This opinion seems to have been held by Plato, and by the poet Stesicorus, Empedocles, and Parmenides, the Egyptians and Athenians, Avicenna and other Arabians, Anaximander, Archelaus, Zeno, Cardan, whom Scaliger ridicules and refutes, inasmuch as the thing was never known to occur. It is also contrary to Aristotle, who scents this very theory; as also Tychiades. As if, says the latter, men could spring from the earth like vegetables. Read on this Christopher Vega. The thought is sometimes indulged, that all other things

are to be resolved into earth, and are nothing but earth. So says Arnobius of those magnificent temples of idols, and Chrysostom and Bernard of gold and silver, calling them red and white earth.

The earth.—In Hebrew and Chaldee it is עָרֶץ, or עֶרֶץ, in Greek χῆμα, words which properly mean *dust*. They are so found in Genesis ii. 7, where the formation of the body of Adam is described; although in the sentence of his death, and his return to earth, whence he was taken (*ibid.* iii. 19), the term ἡ γῆ, *earth*, is found, which the translator renders *dust*, and in the former passage, *the mud of earth*; and an older translation, which Augustine adopts, has *the dust of the earth*, though sometimes he employs the rendering of the two former. Job puts God in mind, *Remember, I beseech Thee, that as mire hast Thou made me, and into dust Thou wilt make me return* (x. 9). Man, no doubt, was made of earth mixed with water; of this water watering the earth, Moses immediately after makes mention, when describing the *creation*; hence, with propriety, has the translator substituted the term *mud* for *dust*: by this *mud*, or *clay*, or *mire*, he designates the body as distinguished from the soul, an opinion which Pineda approves, following Gregory of Valentia (though Toletus thinks otherwise, being rather of opinion that the entire man is meant, so that the earth may be taken for the body, and the water for the soul); and because the earth is the larger ingredient, for that reason it is sometimes called *dust*, sometimes *earth*, instead of *clay*, *mire*, and *slime*. Josephus has happily said, that man was formed of fermented earth, using the word *φυρνωθῆαι*, which means *earth mixing with water, and kneading it as it were into dough*. Symmachus, however, in this passage uses the word ἡ γῆ, *earth*, and the old Latin translator uses *humus*, *the ground*. These words are sometimes confounded, and are differently used, according to the words with which they are joined. Some by earth understand chaos, as if allusion were made to the oblique case, χῆμα. Their notion is, that in the beginning matter was made without any form at all, and that to this allusion is made in the Book of Wisdom (xi. 18), by the expression, *invisible matter*; and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *that things visible were made of things invisible*; but consult what we have said in our work on Wisdom. Man, in his relation to God, is compared to the potter's clay, that he may learn humility, and to submit himself entirely to the Divine counsels, and to implore the Divine assistance.

Return.—Whilst men are formed of all that is corruptible, nay rather whilst they are constantly flowing by, there is a perpetual onward movement on our passage to the goal of corruption, and to the point of circulation. As we have seen in the first chapter, one generation passes away and another succeeds; by our birth we enter as it were by one gate, at death we depart through another. There is no standing still, because the fashion of this world passeth away. Like snakes we move round and round, and complete our *τὸ ἐναυρόν*, *circular year of life*. We glide away like waters that return not, and we walk on a path that we shall never retrace.

1612.—Though Piscator also regards Ecclesiastes as the *production of Solomon's old age, in attestation to his people of his repudiation of idolatry*, yet he, like Brentius and Luther, maintains, in opposition to the patristic and mediæval view, that this book recommends a *cheerful and grateful enjoyment of earthly blessings*.¹ He divides the book into two parts:—

I. DOCTRINAL, concerning the nature of true happiness, on which the sacred writer exhibits—

- a. *Negatively*, that it does not exist in the bare possession of earthly good;
- b. *Positively*, in a natural serenity arising from a filial fear of God, and the legitimate enjoyment of earthly good bestowed by Providence.

II. ADMONITORY, which, like the preceding part, also consists of two sections.

- a. *A dissuasion* from undue anxiety for the acquisition of earthly good;
- b. *A persuasion* to fear God, to good works, and the cheerful enjoyment of earthly good bestowed by Providence.

Piscator's commentary contains judicious critical notes, and has deservedly occupied a distinguished position with the authors of the Assembly's annotations, who used it greatly to their advantage, as may be seen by a comparison of the two works.

1620.—Pineda was determined not only to outdo all Protestant expositors, but even to surpass his fellow-Jesuit commentator Lorinus, and therefore produced a folio volume on Coheleth, of one thousand and seventy-nine pages. As far as the *design* of the book is concerned, this bulky volume contributes nothing towards its elucidation, inasmuch as Pineda simply repeats what the Fathers have said, viz., that the object of *Ecclesiastes* is to *teach us the vanity of all that is earthly, and to direct our minds*

¹ *Johannis Piscatoris Commentariorum in omnes libros veteris Testamenti Tomus Tertius*, p. 403.

to that which is heavenly. Its chief merit consists in supplying us with a thorough digest—more thorough even than that of Lorinus—of all that the Fathers and others have said upon each verse. In addition to this, Pineda gives, in nine parallel columns, at the end of each chapter, the Vulgate, the Venice version, that of R. Shirwode,¹ variations of the Hebrew, translations of the Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, the Brylinger edition of the Bible (1582), and variations of other interpreters; and then gives, in four lower columns, two versions of the Chaldee paraphrase (viz., that of Zamara from the Complutentian Bible, and of Peter Costus, published 1554), and a catena of the Greek Fathers.

The following specimen will give an idea of this most elaborate commentary:—

Cap. iiii. 21. *Who knoweth, &c.*

1. The difficulty of the meaning, beasts figurative.
2. The question, in the relative *Who*. The proof of the immortality of the soul by the wise.
3. To know or to be ignorant, of experience. *To know*, for to reflect, illustration from Paul.
4. The sign of the interrogative in Hebrew. The *spirit*. What?
5. Whether Limbus is described as the place *beneath*. Before Christ all souls descended beneath. The two expositions identical.
6. Where will the souls released from the body be judged?
7. Periphrasis for immortality and corruption. Examples from Moses, Judges, and Ezekiel.

¹ "Robert Shirwode," says Wood, "received his first education in the city of Coventry, whence, being translated to the University of Oxon, made a considerable progress in logicals, but more by far in the Hebrew and Greek languages. Thence, in his mature years, he went to Lovaine, in Brabant, where, about the year 1510, he succeeded Robert Wafel, an Englishman, in the reading the Hebrew lecture to the academicians of the place."—*Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. i. column 58. He published a commentary on Ecclesiastes, under the title, *Liber Hebræorum Concinatoris, seu Ecclesiasten, nuper ad veritatem Hebræicam recognitus, cum nonnullis annotationibus Chaldaicis et quorundam Rabbiorum sententiis, textus obscuros aliquos literaliter explanantibus*. Antwerp. 1523, qu. This I am sorry I could not obtain, in consequence of its extreme rarity, and hence was obliged to omit it in the chronological order of the history.

1. That this passage is somewhat obscure is shown by Olympiodorus, who describes it as enigmatic. "Everywhere," he says, "the Preacher, teaching us by enigmas, directs our thoughts to a future life." Therefore many think, as we have shown before, that these words are among those which recognise slightly the immortality of the human soul, as Olympiodorus, "in secunda exponendi ratione," Nicolaus, Cajet. Bonav. Arbor., have deduced. But we have said, and affirm again, that these are the proper, actual, real sentiments of Solomon. And I now add, that so far from this passage affecting the solid and firm truth of the immortality of the soul, it strikingly confirms it. For common error and popular ignorance (if this is possible on a matter so clear and true) does not enfeeble the truth which it rejects or ignores, nor can it strengthen the falsehood which it sanctions. Olympiodorus, however, when he mooted the whole difficulty of the passage, notes the first and literal sense of the phrase, "*spirit of beasts*," as the name applied to those men "who, not improving the gift of reason, are compared to senseless brutes," or who appear to be deficient of sense. Of whom it might be questioned, he says, as it seems very doubtful to us, whether those who are reckoned worthy of the name of wisdom be so reckoned in the Divine judgment, and those who are now placed in the rank of beasts and of the ignorant be not placed in a better and loftier position by the supreme judgment. But soberly, both the antecedents and the course of the present passage require that the word "beast" should be taken in a literal, and not a figurative sense, as all interpreters agree.

2. Jerome says that by this question is indicated the difficulty of the matter, as it appears to be blasphemous. "Who knows, if the spirit," &c. Not that he makes no distinction between animals and the dignity of the human soul; but by asking *who*, he wishes to shew the difficulty of the matter. For the pronoun *who* in the Bible denotes difficulty, and not impossibility; for example, Isa. liii. 8, "Who shall declare?" Ps. xv. 1, "Who shall abide?" Jerem. xvii. 9, "Who can know it?" These words of Jerome have been copied by Salonijs and Hugo Carensis; Kaldæus also seems to have glanced back at the same thing, when he says that the knowledge of the immortality of the soul belongs not to every one, but to the wise only. "Who being wise," he says, "who knows?" &c. And verily, if the subject be of certain knowledge, and demonstrative by reasoning, it belongs to none but to philosophers and the wise; nor did Olympiodorus adopt this opinion when he said, "This is plainly discovered by every one who has the least share of reason." Just as, referring to the *natural light of reason*, unless eclipsed by the density of the body, says Chrysostom (Homil. 4, De Provid.), those who doubt the immortality of the soul might doubt also whether it is daylight at the meridian. Cajetan is offended from an entirely opposite extreme, when he affirms, that "who knoweth" is the same as if he had said, "none knoweth." "For no philosopher," he says, has hitherto proved the immortality of the soul, and no reasoning seems to be conclusive; but we receive it on faith, and it

harmonises with rational probability." He has taught this in chap. ix. Epist. to Rom. And, in truth, Scotus concurs in the same opinion (iv. distinct. 43, quest. 2). Before either of these, Hugo Victor has, in his way, written admirably; "It cannot be known by man with the same certainty as those things which it is impossible to doubt, and which are proved to the sceptical or doubtful by demonstrative evidence." These were followed by Vatab., who remarks on this verse, that the immortality of the soul "can only be ascertained by the Word of God." And in like manner, Campensis John Ferus, then Julius Scaliger (*De Subtil. contra Cardanum. Exercit.* 307, c. 20). But having touched on this point, as in duty bound, so to this Physician we leave the questions connected with the demonstration of the immortality of the soul, and, concurring with the most sagacious philosophers, let us quit the books concerning the soul. And perchance Ecclesiastes has this matter little in view.

3. "*Who knoweth.*"—The word *Jadagh*, by which we often denote the knowledge and opinion of the intellect, is also connected with practice and sense. A hundred instances might be adduced which are familiar to the inquirer. From this root are the expressions in Gen. iii. 7, "They knew" (felt, it was palpable to them) "themselves to be naked," and Gen. xxii. 12, "Now know I that thou fearest God." It is therefore possible to construe the word in this sense, when everything common to the man and the beast may be perceived by the senses, who verily can say that he has with his senses felt, seen, discovered the immortality of the soul! Hugo Victor smelt out this meaning; "No one," he says, "knows this of men as those things are known which are seen, and heard, and touched, and perceived with the other senses; for they think that nothing is known which is not discerned by the bodily eye, and felt by the touch!" In this way, R. Salom. thinks, the word *to know* may be taken for reflecting or pondering on the soul; *q. d.*, "Who ponders that his soul is immortal? that it will stand at the Divine bar before the supreme Judge; and that, both in immortality and responsibility, it exceeds the brute? For the bulk of men so live, that they neither think nor ponder, but rather openly profess self-ignorance."

The original word in Psalm xxxv. 8, has this force, "Let destruction come on him which he knoweth not." Chaldæus elegantly renders it, "Let the calamity which he neither knows nor considers come on him." And so, Ps. cxxxix. 1, "Thou knowest my downsitting and uprising." Therefore, Solomon says, the man is hardly to be found who ponders in his heart, who considers the dignity of his nature, who regards himself as more important and better than the brutes. With this the phrase of the Apostle appears to correspond, 2 Cor. v. 1; "We know" (we know well, we forget not, it falls not away from our recollection or thought) "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle," &c. It thus appears that the Apostle answers the query of Solomon, Who is it that understands, *i. e.*, considers, this? We, replies Paul; we know, *i. e.*, consider, fix the attention of heart and mind, we understand well, are skilled by habit to contemplate earnestly, as the rude

and undisciplined are incapable of the thought. If you suggest to a carnal man any lofty and spiritual reflection, he might reply, I surely know it to be so, but I know it not in the sense of reflecting it and revolving it in my mind? Therefore it is designedly that the Preacher asks, "Who knoweth?" who hath by repeated thought and discourse discovered the truth of the immortality of the soul and of the future judgment?

4. *If the spirit of the children of Adam.*—The interrogation is correct, being also found in the Septuagint and the ancient version of Jerome. There is this distinction, however, that whereas these subjoin the particle of interrogation to the verb (if it ascends, if it descends), in the Hebrew it is affixed to the verb itself; for *an* (He) is customarily affixed to the word as a note of interrogation. "Spirit" here does not stand, as above, for breathing, but for the living soul, although in the original it is the same word, *Ruach*, as before.

Ascends above, and the spirit of beasts descends below.—It is very easy to understand what Solomon wished to signify by the words. Jerome explains the words "ascend above" to mean "ascend to heaven." Olympiodorus says more explicitly, "*above*" is used for the "kingdom of heaven," "*beneath*," for the lower abyss; and Kaldæus appears to follow this principle of interpretation, "And who understands whether the souls of men ascend above the firmament; or the spirit of beasts, below the earth?" In almost the same way Complut.; but Costa has, "Who, I ask, so excels in wisdom that he can discover whether the spirits of men fly into heaven, and the spirit of brutes lies fixed in the ground?" Both the Chald. and Septuag., the Syriac and Arabic versions retain the second part from the Hebrew, which reads, "Whether the spirit of beasts descends beneath the earth."

A briefer Dissertation on the signification of the words "Above and beneath," "Ascend and descend."

5. It seems too much to demand that the "descending" as well as "ascending" and "above" should have reference to heaven—an interpretation which many later writers, after the Chaldee and Jerome, too readily admit. If you object to this, that this sentiment is brought out by Solomon at a period when yet the souls of the righteous had not risen to heaven, but had gone down to the deep, *i. e.*, to the place which was limbus, and the abode of the holy fathers; they reply, that by "above" is meant the state and place of reward, which was possibly meanwhile under the earth, but afterwards in the higher heaven, whither the souls of the righteous were transplanted when their first retreat was opened by the King of Glory. Yet hardly ever will you find this mode of speaking in the Scriptures, that, before the advent of the Lord Christ, "the spirit of men ascended," but rather that it "descended" to the deep, or at most was carried to Abraham's bosom, which was a part of the deep, a vast chaos separating the place of the damned from the repose of the just. Besides, it seems forced and harsh

that the abode of the fathers and of the just should be called heaven. Lastly, as "the Preacher" speaks generally of immortality and the last judgment, it did not behove him to look back on the souls of the righteous, for they are only a few who rise "above" to the place of holy rest.

Therefore Arboreus, wishing this to be the idea of Solomon, contends that when he said this, all were conducted to the deep equally, although with a different design and issue; *i. e.*, the human souls were borne to the lower regions, but not all to the same place; as Jacob has said, Genesis xxxvii. 35, "I shall go down to my son in sorrow." Therefore no human spirit then "ascended above" to the heavenly joys. Hence we deny that Solomon, in the distinction he made between the spirit of men and of brutes, meant that the immortal spirit, released from the chains of the body, would fly to the higher regions. But, says he, who understands absolutely? who, through only human authority? Who can know by himself whether his hope is true or false? Who, on his own proof, can instil faith into us on this matter? This principle of interpretation is rare, although it but little deviates from that view of the immortality of the soul, and of Divine judgment, which other expositors recognise here.

In the third place, the exposition of the Greeks in the Catena is not very dissimilar. "Because," says it, "it is impossible before the judgment to determine clearly what renders the righteous unrighteous. For many unrighteous pass into unrighteousness, &c., yet are raised above; and, on the other hand, many righteous fall into unrighteousness, and are plunged into evil." You see here what Didymus, the author of the Catena, would understand by the terms "above," "beneath," "ascend," and "descend," and of the state of lofty virtue and of vice, and of infamous and flagrant sin.

6. In the fourth place, Cajet. Nicolaus, Bonavent. Dionys., and several more recently, call the place "above" the scene of Divine judgment and recompense. But the reason for which the place "above" comes to represent the Divine judgment is not explained. Whether the judgment of souls departed from the body will be conducted in some higher sphere is uncertain. Although, from the passage resembling this in Cohel. xii. 7, "and the spirit shall return to Him who made it," it appears that the judged souls, loosed from the body, stand before the Supreme Judge, and are revealed at His bar; because at the last judgment day, when the Judge comes in clouds, and the righteous are caught together with Christ in the air, they appear placed in the air, or in the upper sphere, but below heaven, as the form of speech current among the holy Fathers not obscurely points out. For so Chrysostom (Homil. xiv. in Matt.) says, "All souls, when they depart hence, are carried to the awful tribunal." And in the same strain, Augustine (Lib. de Vanitate Sæculi, cap. i.) wrote, "When the soul is severed from the body, the angels come and conduct it before the bar of the Judge." This view, expressed in similar words, is common to other Fathers, viz., that souls are conducted to a certain place, whither, as they are not admitted to

heaven before the judgment, the Judge comes, his presence being attested by a special manifestation, and the sentence is passed. This point, I think, is uncertain, and not determined by the wiser theologians, whether in the instant of death it is carried to any other place than heaven, or to the abode of the lost, or into purgatory. Therefore no special place "above" is assigned for the judgment of souls. If a sphere "above" is spoken of for the judgment, it is because God the Judge dwells in heaven. Albeit the high and the lofty is regarded as removed from none. It becomes us therefore to say, that the immortal soul ascends "*above*," or returns to its Maker, because it "falls into the hand of the living God." But truly the "souls of beasts descend beneath," *i. e.*, because there is no judgment for them, or aught worthy of recompense.

7. But, fourthly, according to the use and hidden meaning of the scriptural term, this seems to be a periphrasis for the immortality of souls; of the natural extinction of the souls of brutes, and of the natural immortality of the souls of men, as well as of the eternal future. For this reason, to "*ascend above*" signifies the same as to save the surviving, not to suffer it to be reduced with the body to dust. To "*descend beneath*" is equivalent to being entirely dissolved with the body. Hence Hugo Victor wisely explains these words, "The spirit of the children of Adam rises above, because, in the dissolution of the body by death, the survivor continues in life; and the spirit of beasts descends beneath, since it melts away with the body into corruption." So Job laments, chap. xvii. 16, "Into the deepest pit my all have gone down," *q. d.*, it is all over with his interests, his wealth, and life, and the universe is gone into a terrible condition. So it is usual to call incurable death and inevitable ruin "the lowest hell" (Deut. xxxii. 22), "the lowest pit" (Ps. lxxxviii. 6), "the stones of the pit" (Isa. xiv. 19); for, being swallowed up by the earth, or departing and being reduced to the earth, they speedily vanish. And from the opposite idea is derived the phrase to "rise from the earth," which is equivalent to the words, to be saved, to survive, to live. An instance occurs in Ps. xxx. 3, "Thou hast brought up my life from the grave," properly, in Hebrew, "made to ascend" or "exalted," as Vatab. renders it. The Psalmist immediately explains himself, "Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit," *i. e.*, "beneath" to the sepulchre. And in Prov. xxiii. 14, "and shalt deliver his soul from hell." To this class belongs the expression, "the low parts of the earth" (Ezek. xxvi. 20). The word "descend" frequently refers to death and the grave; Gen. xlii. 38; xliv. 29, 31; Ezek. xxvi. 20. Hence it is apparent that the term "beneath" has reference to corruption and death; "above," to life and preservation; and as the phrase "ascend above" signifies to be saved, so to "descend beneath" means to perish, and the earth into which the descent is made is the state of corruption. Thus, also, to "return to God," who is the Author of all life, implies that the soul does not perish, but is united to the Original of life. So "the spirit returns unto Him who made it" (chap. xii. 7).

| VULGAT. | VENETA. | SHIRW. | VARIETAS EX HEBRÆO. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 21. <i>Quis nouit si spiritus filiorum Adā ascendat sursum: & si spiritus iumentorum descendat deorsum?</i> | 21. <i>Quis cognoscit spiritum filiorum hominum? nū ille ascendat sursum, & spiritum iumentorum num ille descendat deorsum in terram?</i> | 21. <i>Quis scit, an ille spiritus filiorum hominis ascendit sursum? spiritus iumentum an ille descendit deorsum in terram?</i> | ¶ 21. <i>Hier. G. P. T. Quis sciens. Camp. quotusquisque interim nouit. T. G. an spiritus. Camp. An hominis anima ascensura sit sursum. G. An spiritus filiorum hominum sit is qui ascendat sursum. R. Spiritus filiorum hominum ascendens ipse sursum Hieron. T. Spiritus pecotis. P. R. Spiritus iumentum. G. S. An spiritus animalis. Camp. An anima reliquorum animalium. Cor. Spiritus bestiae. G. S. sit is qui descendit subter terram. T. deorsum in terram. Camp. cum corporibus interitura sit.</i> |

CATENA GRÆCORUM.

21. *Et quid abundauit homo a peccatore, &c. Quid igitur inter hos discriminis este deprehendi quidve præstantius inueni? Nihil (inquit) cum vniuersa sint vanitas, præter rationalem, spiritalemque lætitiā, quæ ex honestis hominum, virtutisque operibus apta nata est com-*

parari. Nam qui ab hac lætitia semel excederit, ad illam rursus huius tantum præsentis vitæ administrandis, nullo se modo restituet, quantumuis ea probet, appetatque, quæ ad illius recuperationem apprime faciunt.

Pineda's gigantic commentary has no equal, and is indispensable to the historico-critical expositor.

1621. — Within twelve months of the appearance of Pineda's work, John Ferdinand, another Roman Catholic, also published an immense folio of five hundred and seventy pages upon Coheleth,¹ which is a little more critical than those of his Catholic predecessors, Lorinus and Pineda. Like several Protestant

¹ Commentarius in Librum Ecclesiastes, Auctore Tr. Joanne Ferdinando, Magistro Vililensi. Romæ, 1621.

| SEPTUAG. | SYRIAC. | ARAB. | BRYLIN. | VARIETAS EX ALIIS INTERP. |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| 21. <i>Et quis nouit spiritus filiorum hominis, si ascēdat ipse sursū? & spirit. pecoris si descendat ipse deorsum in terram?</i> | 21. <i>Et quis cognoscit spiritum filiorum hominum ascendere sursum, & spiritum iumentorum descendat deorsum in terram?</i> | 21. <i>Et quis cognouerit omnē spiritum filij hominis, anima eius ascendet sursum, & si spiritus animalis animus descendit ad profundum terræ?</i> | 21. <i>Et quis nouit spiritum filiorum hominis si ascendit ipse sursum? & spiritus bestiae si descendit ipse deorsum in terram?</i> | 21. <i>Hier. quis scit Thaum. incertum. Compl. quis nouit spiritu, Thaum. incertum de animabus humanis. Compl. si ascendit. Thaum. in altum subuoluturæ. Compl. & spiritum bestiae. Olymp. spiritus iumentum. Compl. si descendit ipse. Thaum. an deorsum sint defluxura.</i> |
| CHALD. COMPLUT. ZAM. | | | | |
| Et quis est sapiens, qui sciat, si spiritus omnis filiorum hominis, ascendat supra firmamentum, & spiritus omnis iumentum descendat sub terram. | | | | |
| CHALD. PETR. COSTI. | | | | |
| 21. <i>Quis quæso tantum sapientia excellit, ut ei exploratum esse possit num animi hominum in cælum peruolent, spiritus vero brutorum animalium desixus humi iaceat.</i> | | | | |

commentators, Ferdinand regards this book as a treatise upon the highest good, which, according to him, consists in despising every earthly good, and in adhering to the service of God. Solomon, being raised above men, and enlightened with the Divine light, condemns all earthly things, all the desires of men, and all the opinions of the philosophers, who make human happiness to consist in created good and perishing things, and not in those things which make us truly happy.¹

¹ Supra hominem elevatus, diuinoque illustratus lumine damnat cuncta terrena

The specimens we have given from the commentaries of Lorinus and Pineda will give a fair idea of Ferdinand's mode of interpretation.

1621. — Whilst the chief leaders of the Reformation on the Continent were issuing expositions upon this book on the one hand, and Roman Catholics, in emulation, were plying us with their bulky folios on the other, no commentary on Coheleth, *written in English*, was published till 1621, when the small quarto of Thomas Granger made its appearance.¹ Granger, too, regards Coheleth as *a treatise upon the highest good*. It is SOLOMON'S ETHICS, his tract DE SUMMO BONO, of the chief and complete felicity, and the world's vanity, and therefore the very root, seed, or kernel of all happy knowledge, both of good and evil, in all things, natural, political, ecclesiastical.²

The main purpose of Solomon in this book is to shew wherein the blessed estate and happy condition of man in this vale of misery consisteth. Which, seeing that it is not to be found in the world, I mean out of the Church, the wise men of the world are of so different, yea contrary opinions among themselves, and all aberr from the truth, because, being in darkness, they neither know God nor themselves, neither what is good nor what is ill for man in this vain life. Again, they lay down this for a ground or principle, that there is a *summum bonum*, or felicity, by the wisdom and endeavour of man to be found in the things of the world; but, this ground

hominum desideria, et omnes opiniones Philosophorum, qui in bono creato, et in his rebus perituris constituunt felicitatem hominis, pro re quæ nos beatificat. P. 7.

¹ J. Serranus' "godly and learned commentary upon Ecclesiastes," which appeared, 1585, is a translation from the Latin; Cartwright's Homilies are in Latin, and were not published till 1648; Henry Lock's is a poetical paraphrase; and H. Broughton's is simply a translation of Coheleth, with a general introduction, but without a commentary. As to Mr. Barham's quoting Pilkington (see the Bible Revised, part i., p. viii. Intr.) as one of those commentators on Ecclesiastes who deserve special mention, we can only say, that if he had perused the biographical notice prefixed to the Parker Society's edition of this prelate's works, he would never have fallen into this error. The author of this biographical notice (the Rev. James Scholefield) shews, beyond a doubt (p. ii.), that Pilkington's lectures on Ecclesiastes were never published.

² A familiar exposition or commentary on Ecclesiastes, wherein the world's vanity and the true felicity are plainly deciphered, by Thomas Granger, London, 1621. See the beginning of the third Dedictory Epistle.

being false, all their buildings must needs fall down to the ground. But Solomon here, by the special instruction and direction of the Spirit of God, layeth down such a felicity as the world by their wisdom could not comprehend. The brief sum whereof is this, *Fear God and keep his commandments*; or, in a word, *faithful obedience is the chief good*. This is the theme, or question, as appears by the conclusion of all, chapter xii. 13. Now the argument of confirmation is thus framed:—

PROP. — *Either is the fear of God and obedience to His laws the chief good, or else it is to be found in and by the things of this world, which we call the goods of the body, the goods of the mind, the goods of fortune, or outward goods.*

Principal Syllogism.

ASSUM. — *But it is not to be found in and by these things.*

CONCL. — *Therefore is the fear of God, and obedience to His laws, the chief good.*

The proposition is evident, the assumption is to be proved.

PROP. — *If all be most vain, then there is no felicity or chief good to be found in the things of the world.*

Prosyllogism, i.e., a reason confirming the principal.

ASSUM. — *But all things are vanity, most vain.*

CONCL. — *Therefore, &c.*

Granger labours to establish syllogisms, prosyllogisms, episylogisms, throughout the book.

1627. — Though the enormous Roman Catholic commentaries chiefly consist of the same copious extracts from the Fathers and the mediæval writers, we should be sorry to miss the large folio of Cornelius a Lapide on Ecclesiastes. Not that this Jesuit contributed much towards developing the true design of Coheleth, for he simply repeats the opinion of St. Augustine and St. Jerome upon this subject, and says that *the scope of the book is to teach us true wisdom, enabling us to discern vanity from truth, and to see that all the things which present themselves upon this earth, alluring and enticing us, are utterly vain, and that those things in heaven are really true and solid, so that by learning this lesson we may rise to a contempt of this vain world, and be*

¹ Commentary, pp. 2, 3.

*possessed with a love for and longing after heaven and God, the true and the solid.*¹

Neither has Lapidé improved upon the division of the book ; for, like De Lyra and others, he divides it into *two parts* : —

Part I. (chap. i. 1 – vi. 12) shews that all earthly things which are highly esteemed by vain man, are empty and vain, and that consequently the happiness said to exist in them is vain.

Part II. (chap. vii. 1 – xii. 14) explodes this vanity, and shews that truth and true happiness are centred in virtue, and in the fear and service of God.

Accordingly, Ecclesiastes refutes those who consider supreme happiness to consist in knowledge, in chap. i. ; reproves those who, like the Epicureans, place it in pleasure, in chaps. ii. and iii. ; those who place it in honour, in chap. iv. ; and those who consider it to consist in riches, in chaps. v. and vi. ; the former part of these chapters being occupied with refuting the opinions of others, and the latter part, with establishing his own. He then speaks in chap. vii. of three kinds of good, of the *soul*, *body*, and *fortune*, and the opposite evils ; then, shewing the use of all things, &c., that all our affairs are controlled by Divine Providence. And recommends, in chap. viii. to the end of the book, that we should lead a godly life, shewing how we shall at last be united with God, and enjoy eternal happiness.²

¹ Finis et scopus hujus libri est, docere veram sapientiam ; scilicet qua secer-namus vanitatem à veritate ; nimirum ut cognoscamus vana esse omnia quæ in terris se ostentant, alliciunt et ablandiuntur ; vera verò et solida esse, quæ in cælis sunt, ut ex hac dispari cognitione assurgamus ad mundi, utpote vani, contemptum, ac ad cæli Deique, utpote veri solidique amorem et desiderium.—R. P. Cornelii a Lapide, e Societate Jesu, Commentarius in Ecclesiasten. Antverpiæ, 1694, p. 4.

² Verùm dico duas primarias Ecclesiastis esse partes. Prior est à c. i. usque ad cap. vii. quâ ostendit omnes res mundi sublunares, quas homines vani magnas æstimant, inanes esse et vanos, ac proinde vanam esse felicitatem quæ in ijs collocatur. Posterior à c. vii. porrigitur usque ad finem, qua depulsa vanitate, demonstrat veritatem veramque felicitatem sitam esse in virtute, ac Dei timore et cultu. Igitur primo statim capite eos refellit, qui scientiâ summum bonum metiebantur, secundo item ac tertio capitibus eos redarguit, qui in voluptate finem bonorum, ut Epicurei collocarunt ; quarto capite eos, qui in honoribus ;

But the chief utility of this book is its lengthy quotations from the Fathers and schoolmen. It must also be added that Lapidés' commentary is more critical than those of his fellow-Jesuit expositors, Lorinus, Pineda, and Ferdinand.

1628. — The highly gifted William Pemble, who died in his thirty-second year (April 14, 1623), while on a visit to his tutor, Richard Capel, minister of Eastington, in Gloucestershire, wrote an analytical exposition of Ecclesiastes, which was published in 1628, and is embodied in the several folio editions of his entire works.¹ Capel, who published the commentary of his pupil, prefixed a dedicatory epistle to it, giving therein his own opinion of the design of the book, which entirely agrees with that of Pemble.

"As we in our sickness," says the teacher, "complain of what occasioned our sickness, rather than of the disease itself ; so Solomon, when he came to himself, made this book, wherein his drift is, not to stand so much upon his fall, as the means of his fall ; I mean the vanity not of some but of all worldly matters, which were the means and occasion that first drew him from the Lord ; such sweet things did deaden his taste, and made him that he could not relish the things of heaven."

This is rather an ingenious attempt to account for the remarkable fact, that there is not a *single recantation* in the book, which is described as *Solomon's Recantation*.

"Cohemoth," says the pupil, "a preacher, or reconciled penitent, or both, this being his penitential sermon, or writing delivered to the church or assembly of the faithful Jews,"

quinto et sexto eos confutat, qui in divitiis et opibus felicitatem posuere. Prior itaque hæc capitum sex portio in refellendis alienis occupatur ; altera verò totidem capitum pars in confirmanda sua sententia versatur. Igitur c. vii. de tribus bonorum generibus disserit : *Animi*, inquam, *corporis* et *fortunæ*, deque contrariis malis. Quis horum omnium sit usus, utque res omnes nostræ à divina pendeant providentia, luculenter ostendit. Hinc ad finem usque libri de vita piæ ac justè transigenda, quo tandem Deo jungamur, et felicitate perfruamur æternâ, concionatur, p. 5.

¹ Solomon's Recantation and Repentance, or the Book of Ecclesiastes briefly and fully explained. Works, p. 273, &c.

institutes an inquiry "*wherein man's chiefest good and blessedness consisteth.*" He proceeds in the first part (i. 1–vi. 12) "NEGATIVELY, disabling the virtue of such things as might seem to make us happy; and declares, in the second part, (vii. 1–xii. 14) AFFIRMATIVELY and POSITIVELY, *wherein man's blessedness stands, and whereby it is obtained. This he doth—*

"1. Particularly, in the several degrees and means of true happiness, so far as in this life we may attain unto it, in chaps. vii., viii., ix., x., xi., and part of chap. xii.

"2. Summarily, in the conclusion of this whole discourse, chapter xii. 8."

As this is the first entirely analytical commentary, and as it shews how the Scriptures were reduced to the logic and mathematical precision of the time, we give a specimen of Pemble's Analysis of chap. i. 1–7.

Inscription, verse 1, describing the author of the book—

1. By the person he now takes on him, *Coheteleth*, a Preacher, or reconciled penitent, or both, this being his penitential sermon, or writing, delivered to the Church or assembly of the faithful Jews.

2. By his parentage, son of David.

3. By his dignity and office, a king, amplified by the place, in Jerusalem.

Doctrine, enquiring wherein man's chiefest good and blessedness consisteth, wherein he proceedeth—

1. Negatively, disabling the virtue of such things as might seem to make us happy, which is done—

1. Generally, in one main proposition, That there is nothing within the compass and power of created nature that can make a man happy. This negative proposition is—

1. Delivered (verse 2), concluding all under *vanity*, and that most *vain* *vanity*, weakness, inconstancy, fruitlessness, &c., and that repeated, to make it seem the more vain.

2. Confirmed by four general reasons.

2. Affirmatively. See chap. vii.

Verse 3. 1. From the *fruitlessness* of all human actions, endeavours, counsels, and projects, wherein he busieth himself under the sun, *i. e.*, in matters of this world, whose uttermost extent is confined within the possibilities of the creature, and the circuit of this life. All the happiness that man may propose or procure to himself by those means, if it be resolved into its sinful issue and

conclusion, ends in nothing, and leaves unto a man no profit, *profit*, *i. e.*, residue, and remaining fruit to abide with him; when all that account is subducted, there resteth nothing but ciphers.

2. From the *mutability* and changeable condition of man himself. Eternity is an inseparable accident of perfect felicity; nor can those things make us truly happy, which cannot establish us in the perpetual enjoyment of our bliss. And thus are the things of our world, whose greatest strength cannot alter the frail and perishing estate of man. But (verse 4) generation cometh, and generation passeth away, both fathers and children, all are at last thrust out of possession of the earth's felicity. In which only complement of true felicity, man is so far from being happy as his condition is worse than that of other creatures, yea, of those that seem most inconstant. Instances are four—

1. The *earth* abiding for ever, seeing the rise and fall of all ages, the stage of all actions, the womb that giveth and receiveth all, viler than the worst man for its nature, better than the most happy for its continuance in that being that it hath (verse 4).

2. The *sun* (verse 5) which, as a champion, runs his course from one end of heaven to the other; and with an even and unaltered motion observes the time of rising and setting; so setting in the evening, as it ariseth with equal glory and brightness in the morning (not so in man). *Solus occidere*, &c.

3. The *winds* (verse 6), which seem most unsteady and changeable in their motion, yet so pass over the quarters and coasts of the world, as they observe their circuits, *צפון*, wherein they run their compass yearly, monthly, and daily (in some places) as God ordains, who brings them out of his treasury.

4. The *waters*, a shuttle and running substance, yet more durable and lasting than man and his felicity. The sea still holding the same quantity since the creation for depth and wideness, notwithstanding the infinite access of all rivers emptying themselves into it; and as the sea is never full, so are rivers never empty, the waters still running, but still renewed by supply from the clouds and their fountains (verse 7).

1636.—This opinion is also espoused by Cocceius, the founder of the Theological school bearing his name.¹ The following is his analysis of the book:—

A. Thesis (i. 2).

B. Demonstration. Because—

I. Labour is unprofitable (3), from 1. *The nature of things* (4–7). 2.

¹ Cocceji Opera, Editio Tertia, Amstelodami, vol. ii., p. 520, *seq.*

Imperfection of things (8-12). 3. *The kinds of labour*, where there is, (1.) Examination (13). (2.) Attestation (14). (3.) Declaration (15). (4.) Demonstration. a. In proof of wisdom and folly (16). A §. Absolute (18, &c.) B. §. Comparative (chap. ii. 12, &c.) b. The result of the proof. A. §. Hatred of life (17). B. §. Hatred of work (18). C. §. Despair of work (20). 4. *The reasons*, 1. placed (1.) generically; (2.) specifically (iii. 2). II. Reference to the thesis (9). III. Illustrates (1.) The government of God (11). (2.) Invocation of good (12). (3.) Its confirmation (13, &c.) Because—

II. Labour oppresses. 1. The injustice and violence of men (chap. iv. 1). 2. The effect of these on (1.) Society. a. Emulation (4). b. Envy (6). (2.) Individuals, avarice (6, &c.) 3. The vanity of overmuch help (13, &c.) Because—

III. There is danger in well doing, in 1. Approach to God's house (chap. v. 1). 2. Prayer (2). 3. Vows (4, &c.). 4. Recognition of the Divine government (8). Because—

IV. The common hope of good is vain. 1. Honour. 2. Money (10). 3. Abundant increase (11). 4. Satisfaction (12). 5. Treasures (13, &c.) 6. A large family (chap. vi. 3). Because—

V. The fruit of labour is transient (7, 8). Because—

VI. Eager desire is vain (9). 1. τὸ παρὸν, is better. 2. Men remain within their own rank (10). 3. Hope and gladness heap up vanity (11). 4. Uncertainty of human good (12). (1.) Overshadowed good. (2.) Unknown future. (3.) Good not subjected to sensible test. Hence, better is (a.) Name to ointment (chap. vii. 1). (b.) Day of death to day of birth. (c.) Society of the mourning than of the merry (2). (d.) Sorrow to laughter (3). (e.) The end than the beginning (8). (f.) Patience (9). (g.) Wisdom with inheritance (11). (h.) Justice and wisdom, with the excess of each (16, &c.). (i.) Pleasure than wisdom, wherein 1 §. Thesis, extolling wisdom (chap. viii. 1). 2 §. Confirmation, from the fruits of wisdom. (1.) In public life (3). (2.) Private (5). 3 §. Antithesis (1.) Defects of wisdom in (1.) Public life. (2.) Private (9, 10, &c.) (2.) Pleasures of good, which includes in it—

i. Proposition (15).

ii. Confirmation, from the inconvenience of wisdom (16).

A. Useless labours (17).

B. Utter emptiness, from 1. Common appointment of God (chap. ix. 1). 2. Common uncertainty (2). 3. Common lot (3, &c.). 4. Obstructions to wisdom (13).

(b.) Impertinence of those to whom it is necessary (16). (c.) Their guilt (18). (d.) Mixture of folly in the wise (chap. x. 1). (e.) Unjust distribution of honour (5, &c.). (f.) *Επαιρολογία*, concerning vain and baneful pleasure (15). (1.) The state from the throat (17). (2.) Constitution from care (18). (1.) In an example of evil (19). (2.) Of good (20). (3.) Evils following.

a. Envy (20). b. Neglect of the needy (chap. xi. 1). c. The Pretext (4). (d.) Advice given (6).

(3.) In life itself (7). (4.) In better portions of life (9, &c.).

C. Epilogue, in which the author

1. Concludes his thesis (chap. xii. 8).

2. Delivers its use (9).

1. Προσῆχον (10).

2. Rei colophon (13).

1637.—The states of the Netherlands, where our persecuted Puritans and other eminent divines found an hospitable asylum, and where many of their elaborate works were first published, now obtained a vernacular authorised version, with large annotations, by the advice and authority of the States-General given to the Synod of Dort. "The Dutch Annotations," as they are called, were so highly esteemed, that they were translated into English by Theodor Haak, in 1657,¹ and were recommended by Parliament, along with Diodati, to the authors of the Assembly's Annotations. The Dutch Annotators agree, with "many of the learned," that *Solomon wrote this book in his old age, after that he had for many years together turned away from the right path of true godliness, but was now again converted unto God. Wherein he, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, before the whole congregation of God, testifieth his earnest sorrow and repentance for the former part of his life, loathing and abhorring it, as being vanity of vanities, whereby a man is not able to attain unto temporal rest, and satisfaction or contentment of mind, much less unto the highest and chiefest good, which is everlasting salvation. In like manner his intent and purpose is, by his own example and pattern, to lead all men to virtue and piety.*

To this end and purpose he doth in *the first place* make a short recital of the whole course of his life, and wherein he had chiefly taken his delight and recreation. Then, in *the second place*, he relateth also that he heeded and observed the practice and course, about which many men did most

¹ The Dutch Annotations upon the whole Bible, translated by Theodor Haak, 2 vols. fol., 1657.

busy and trouble themselves in this life, being, for the most part, vanities, yea also wicked and ungodly devices, he testifying that the All-wise and Almighty God directeth and governeth all things according to His will and pleasure, and that things do not fall out in the world by fortune or chance, as many men do imagine. *Lastly*, Solomon exhorteth all men to fear and serve God uprightly, and to practise and perform all good works and duties, rejoicing in an honest and godly manner in the things which they do enjoy, and have received at the bountiful hand of God, especially while they are yet young, strong, and of perfect memory and understanding, having at all times the severe and righteous judgment of God before their eyes.¹

It will be seen that these Dutch divines, like the early Reformers, recognise that this book *recommends a grateful enjoyment of the good creatures of God*.

1639.—Determined that the Roman Catholics should no longer have the monopoly of the large folio commentaries, Michael Jermin, "Doctor in Divinity, and Rector of St. Martin's, Ludgate," now produced a folio upon Ecclesiastes.² The mode of commenting on the text which our Protestant divine adopted is similar to that pursued by the Catholics, whom he evidently imitates; and we are sorry to say that the copy is infinitely inferior to the original, as will be seen from the following specimen. With many of his predecessors, Jermin thinks that *the scope of the Royal Philosopher, the Ecclesiastical King of Israel, in this book, is to shew where the greatest good of man is, by shewing it not to be in the things of this world; he declareth what it is, by declaring what we must be, in the fear of the Lord, and in keeping his commandments*.

A specimen of his commentary —

Chap. vi. 4. *For he cometh in with vanity, &c.* — Saint Bernard, speaking unto man, saith, *Cogita unde veneris, et erubescere, ubi sis et ingemisce, quo vadis et contremisce*, Think from whence thou camest, and be ashamed, where thou art, and sigh for sorrow, whither thou goest, and tremble with

¹ Vol. i., not paged.

² A Commentary upon the whole book of Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, by Michael Jermin, Doctor in Divinity, and Rector of St Martin's, Ludgate, London. 1639.

anguish (Ser. de Primord. Med. et Noviss.) Saint Austin, also, speaking unto man, saith, *Intelligas ergo in quantum sit ingressus tuus flebilis, progressus tuus debilis, et egressus tuus horribilis*, Understand, therefore, how lamentable thy coming is, how feeble thy going on is, how terrible thy going out is (l. cui tit. Speculum Peccato). It is the like manner of expressing himself, and of setting out man's misery and condition, which here the Preacher useth. *He cometh in with vanity*, with the vanity of original corruption, *and departeth in darkness*, in the darkness of his actual transgressions. For these are darkness, indeed, by which the light of God's favour is darkened and kept from us, the light of knowledge is darkened and shut up in us, by which the darkness of eternal misery is brought upon us. Saint Austin noteth (Ps. viii.), *Non dixit Deus, fiant tenebræ, et factæ sunt, et tamen tenebras ordinavit, et divisit à luce tenebras*, God did not say, Let there be darkness, and there was darkness; but yet God ordered the darkness, and divided the darkness from the light: it is so with the transgressions of men; God never said, Let them be; but, having their being from man, he ordereth them, and by his justice divideth them from the light of happiness. But here is nothing said of the covetous wretch's life; his vain coming in, his dark going out mentioned; we read nothing of his wretched life, as if that were not worthy to be remembered. And indeed it follows, *His name shall be covered with darkness*; whereby is not meant only that his name shall be forgotten, for then it had been enough to have said, *his name shall be covered*. But, seeing it is added that *his name shall be covered with darkness*, it is meant that the foulness and blackness of his actions shall make his name to be as a thing abhorred to be thought upon. And surely when vanity lets him in, and darkness shuts him out, what could it be but wretchedness that kept him company in the meanwhile? But it seemeth to me that the original here may not amiss be translated, *he cometh into vanity, and goeth into darkness*. First, he cometh into vanity: Saint Ambrose, shewing the vanity of man's life, and that it is but a shadow, telleth us (Ps. cxviii.), that when the Son of God was born of the Virgin, it is said that the power of the highest overshadowed her; *Quia in umbra descendit, ab umbra incipiens operari salutem hominis, et consummaturus claritate solis æterni*, Because he descended into a shadow, from a shadow beginning to work the salvation of man, which he will finish in the brightness of the Eternal Sun. And the same Father, considering the words of David, *I will live and keep thy words*, thereupon noteth (*ibid.*), *Vivam ait, quasi nondum vivens; hic enim in umbra vivimus. Ergo vita ista in corpore, umbra est vitæ, et imago, non veritas*, He saith, I will live, as not living yet, for here we live in a shadow. This life therefore in the body is a shadow and an image of life, not the truth of it. Secondly, *He goeth into darkness*; *sed forte tales esse putet homo, quales patiuntur in carceribus inclusi. Utinam tales essent, tamen in tabulis nemo vult esse. In his autem carcerum tenebris possint includi et innocentes. In talibus enim tenebris sunt inclusi martyres*, But perhaps some one may think this darkness to be such as they

suffer who are shut up in prison. I wish that it were such; but yet in this darkness no one would willingly be. But, in the darkness of prisons, innocents may be shut up, for in such darkness martyrs have been imprisoned, as Saint Austin speaketh (Homil. 40). This, therefore, is another *darkness*, this is that outer darkness of which the Scripture speaketh, and into which he is cast, *Qui extra Deum penitus est, quoniam dum tempus est corrigi noluerit*, Who is without God wholly, because, when there was time, he would not be corrected, as St. Austin speaketh, (Ps. v.) So doth St. Ambrose also expound the outer darkness, saying, *Quicunque extra sunt promissa caelestium mandatorum, in tenebris exterioribus sunt; quia mandata Dei lumen sunt. Et quicunque sine Christo est, in tenebris est, quia lumen in tenebris est Christus*, Whosoever are without the promises of the heavenly commandments, they are in outer darkness, because the commandments of God are light. Whosoever is without Christ, he is darkness, because Christ is a light in darkness. And of this outer darkness St. Austin saith, *Penitus autem esse extra Deum, quid est nisi esse in summa cæcitate?* But to be wholly without God, what is it but to be in extreme darkness? Into this darkness, therefore, it is that the soul of a covetous wretch goeth, when the life into which he came is vanished away. And when his soul thus lieth in the darkness of horror, when his body lieth in the darkness of the grave, then is his name also covered, either with the darkness of silence, abhorring to mention it, or, if it be mentioned, with the darkness of reproaches that are cast upon it.

1643.—It is remarkable that, notwithstanding all the oriental celebrities and Biblical scholars who lived in England at the period, the first commentary upon the entire Bible in English is a translation from the Italian of Diodati, the history of which is as follows. John Diodati or Deodati, who was born at Geneva (not at Lucca), on June 6, 1575, where he also died on October 3, 1649,¹ published the first edition of his Italian version of the Bible at Geneva, 1603, fol., issued a second edition with notes in 1607, 4to, and a third improved edition in 1641, fol. He also began publishing a French translation of the Bible, with many additional notes, in 1644, which he

¹ Orme's remark, that Diodati was "born 1576, died 1638" (Bibliotheca Biblica, p. 150), is a most unaccountable blunder. Even the English translator of Diodati, R. G., as he signs himself, is inaccurate in the biographical and bibliographical remarks which he makes in his address to the reader, as will be seen from the excellent article on Diodati in Ersch and Gruber's Encyclop., sect. v.

finished in 1646. The annotations of the second edition were published by R. G. in 1643, and thus supplied the English reading public with a commentary on the whole Bible. R. G. also published a second edition in 1648, inserting additional notes, which Diodati made in his French Bible, and a third edition in 1651. Diodati's annotations were so highly esteemed that they were recommended, along with the Dutch annotations, to the author of the Assembly's annotations. But, whatever may be the merits of these notes on other portions of Scripture, they throw no additional light upon *Cohemoth*, since Diodati simply repeats what many of his predecessors have said, viz., *Solomon, towards the latter end of his life, after he had seen so many trials, and committed so many errors, makes here a solemn kind of speech for a public confession, and the instruction of the Church upon two very weighty and necessary points. The first is, how a faithful man ought and may wisely govern his life in this world, to live happily therein. The other, how he should direct it towards the sovereign end of eternal happiness.*

The following is a specimen of his analysis:—

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|--------------------------|
| Solomon's design in this book (excellent) | { | 1. For its principal author, one Shepherd, chap. xii. 11. | { | { | 1. Quicken as goads. 2. Fasten as nails, chap. xii. 11) | |
| | | 2. For its instructional author, Solomon, commended for his | | | | 1. Wisdom. |
| | | 2. Assiduity in teaching words of | | | | 1. Truth, chap. xii. 10. |
| | | 2. Delight. | | | | |

doth shew wherein the *summum bonum* or *true happiness* of man doth consist; a thing eagerly sought after by the heathen philosophers, but never found out by them, they in this argument being as men destitute of *light*, and wandering in *darkness*. This *happiness* doth Solomon the Preacher define—

- | | |
|---|--|
| { | 1. <i>Negatively</i> , in the six first chapters, shewing wherein it doth not consist, therein confuting the vain opinions and conjectures of the philosophers. |
| | 2. <i>Affirmatively</i> , in the six last chapters, shewing wherein this <i>happiness</i> doth consist, therein rectifying the judgment of all that seek after it. |

1644. — As a literary curiosity must be mentioned, Quarles' poetical paraphrase of Ecclesiastes, published by his widow in 1644.¹ The title of the book, viz., *Solomon's Recantation*, shews that Quarles follows the opinion that this is a penitential dirge. The following is a specimen of this curious paraphrase, which consists of twelve sections, according to the number of the chapters, each section being followed by a soliloquy of similar length.

Chap. i. 1-11:—

1. Thus says the best of preachers and of kings,
Thus Solomon, the son of David sings,
2. The greatest happiness that earth can prize
Is all most vain, and vainest vanities.
3. What profit can accrue to man? what gains
Can crown his actions, or reward his pains?
Beneath the orb of heaven's surrounding sun,
What, worth his labour, hath his labour done?
4. One generation gives another way,
But earth abides in one perpetual stay;
5. The prince of light puts on his morning crown,
And in the evening lays his glory down,
Where, leaving earth to take a short repose,
He soon returns, and rises where he rose.
6. The troubled air provokes the southern states,
And then it blusters at the Boreau gates;
It whirls about in his uncertain sphere,
And rides his unknown circuit everywhere.
7. All rivers to the seas their tribute yield,
And yet th' hydropic seas are never filled,
Their sliding streams pursue their passage home,
And drive their hasty tides from whence they come.
8. The world is all composed of change, nor can
Her vanity be characterized by man;
The eye's not satisfied, and what we hear
Fills not the concave of th' insatiate ear:
9. The thing that heretofore hath been, we see
Is but the same that is, and is to be:
And what is done, is what is to be done;
There's nothing that is new beneath the sun.
10. What novelty can earth proclaim, and say
It had no precedent before this day?

¹ *Solomon's Recantation*, &c., by John Quarles, London, 1644.

No, no; there's nothing modern times can own,
The which precedent ages have not known;

11. The deeds of former days expire their date
In our collapsed memories, and what
Time's early sunshine hath not ripened yet,
Succeeding generations shall forget.

1644. — The appearance of Grotius' Commentary on the Old Testament in 1644, a year before his death, gave a new tone to the interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures in general, and to that of Coheleth in particular, through the profound scholarship and great liberality displayed therein. This acute critic takes *Coheleth* to mean *collector*, *compiler*, and regards the book as *a collection of different opinions concerning happiness, as propounded by those who were reputed sages by their own people, just as the book of Job discusses the different opinions respecting the Divine government of human affairs*. We are therefore not to wonder if we find things in it which we cannot approve, since all the different opinions are necessarily *mixed up with his argument, just as Aristotle does, before giving his final opinion*; but the beginning and end sufficiently shew the drift of the book, for which, as the Hebrews say, it deserves a place in the canon.

The main service, however, which Grotius has rendered with regard to this book, is his shrewd discovery that Solomon is not its author, which no commentator had made since the days of

¹ Melius fortè vertetur συναρπαστής (*coacervator*), quomodo verbum ἄρπ per συναρπάζειν verti solet, ut intelligamus redactas in hunc librum varias hominum, qui sapientes apud suos quisque habebantur, opiniones περὶ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας (*de beatitudine*), planè sicut liber Jobi omnes ferme quæ fuerunt aut esse possunt de divina rerum humanarum gubernatione, aut contra eam, sententias complectitur. Quare mirari non debemus, si quædam hic legimus non probanda; omnes enim sententias cum suis argumentis recitanti, ut Aristoteles facere solet priusquam quid definiat, necesse erat id accidere; sed cum et initium et finis satis monstrent quod sit scriptoris propositum, ob eas causas (ut aiunt Hebræi), meritò in canonem receptus est. Ego tamen Solomonis esse non puto, sed scriptum seriò sub illius Regis, tanquam penitentiâ ducti, nomine. Argumentum ejus rei habeo multa vocabula, quæ non alibi quàm in Daniele, Esdrâ et Chaldæis interpretibus reperias. Hugonis Grotii Opera, 4 vols. Londini, 1679, vol. i., p. 258.

Luther. "*I believe,*" says he, "*that the book is not the production of Solomon, but was written in the name of this king, as being led by repentance to do it. For it contains many words which cannot be found except in Ezra, Daniel, and the Chaldee paraphrasts.*"

Grotius' notes are very brief, but always very instructive, and abound with parallels from the Classics.

1645. — Stimulated by the annotations on the Bible, which the Germans, the Dutch, the Italians, and the French Protestants possessed, English Protestants were at last determined to have something similar. To this end a committee of Parliament nominated some of the most learned divines of the day, supplying them with books, and recommending to them the Dutch and Diodati's Annotations, to produce a similar work. Hence the commentary upon the Scriptures, known by the erroneous name of "*The Assembly's Annotations,*"¹ which was first published in 1645; then, with improvements, in 1651; and a third edition, 1657. Dr. Reynolds, bishop of Norwich, is the author of the Commentary on Ecclesiastes. Reynolds follows the opinion of many of his predecessors, that *Solomon makes known his repentance to all the Church, that thereby he might*

¹ "*The Annotations on the Bible,*" says Neal, "*which go under their [the Assembly's] name, were neither undertaken nor revised by them, but by a Committee of Parliament, who named the commentators, and furnished them with books; nor were they all members of the Assembly, as appears by the following list. Those with asterisks were not of the Assembly.*"

| The Commentary on | Written by |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| The five books of Moses | Rev. Mr. Ley, Sub-Dean of Chester. |
| The two books of Kings | Dr. Gouge. |
| The two books of Chronicles | |
| Ezra | |
| Nehemiah | |
| Esther | *Mr. Meric Casaubon. |
| The Psalms | |
| Proverbs | |
| Ecclesiastes | |
| Solomon's Song | *Mr. Smalwood, recommended by Arch- bishop Usher. |

glorify God, and strengthen his brethren, thus imitating his father David; he therefore translates chap. i. 1, *The words of the soul, or person congregated or gathered unto the church or congregation of saints, &c.*¹ He also divides the book into two principal parts, in the first of which (chap. ii. — vi. 12) the penitent king shews, from his own experience, that happiness can neither be found in wisdom, knowledge, pleasures, honour, greatness, power, nor in an outward form of religion, it all being vanity; but in the excellent means which he prescribes in the second part (chap. vii. — xii. 12), viz. :—

Contentation of heart in the sweet and free enjoyment of all outward blessings, with thanksgiving, and in the fear of God; quiet and humble acquiescency under the holy and powerful providence of God, in all the events which befall us in the world; sincerity of heart in his worship, and prudent piety in our vows, prayers, and addresses unto him; patience of spirit under all the oppressions we meet with in the world; a composed preparedness of mind to undergo sorrows and afflictions; prudent and pious moderation of spirit in our behaviour towards all men, that so we may preserve our names from calumny, and our persons from danger; meekness, charity, patience towards such as offend, considering common frailty and our own weakness; sobriety of mind, contenting ourselves with a measure of wisdom and knowledge, and not busying ourselves with things too high for us; practical prudence, which may render us beautiful in the eyes of others; loyalty and obedience towards magistrates, that our lives may not

| The Commentary on | Written by |
|--|---|
| Isaiah | Mr. Gataker. |
| Jeremiah | |
| Lamentations | |
| Ezekiel | *Mr. Pemberton, in the first edition, |
| Daniel, and the smaller Prophets | *Bishop Richardson, in the second. |
| Matthew | Mr. Ley. |
| Mark | |
| Luke | |
| John | |
| St. Paul's Epistles | Dr. D. Featly; but his notes are broken and imperfect, the author dying before he had revised them. |

There were two other persons concerned in this work, who might probably have the other parts of Scripture allotted them, not here mentioned, viz., Mr. Downham, and Mr. Reading." History of the Puritans, part iii., chap. x.

¹ Annotations upon all the books of the Old and New Testament, third edition, 2 vols. London, 1657., vol. i. not paged.

be made uncomfortable by their displeasure; wisdom to discern of time and judgment; preparedness of heart against inevitable evils; submission to the holy and invincible providence of God, admiring his works, adoring his judgments; joyful fruition of comforts; conscionable and industrious walking in our particular callings; wisdom so to carry ourselves amidst the many casualties which meet us in the world, as that we may by our loyalty towards superiors decline the danger of displeasure from them, and by our charity to inferiors lay up a good foundation for ourselves against the time to come; lastly, moderation in the use of comforts here, and preparation, by the fear of God and keeping of his commandments, for death and judgment hereafter. That by these means, as our life is sweet, so our death may be welcome. That the piety of our youth may help us to bear the infirmities of our age, and to lift up our heads in the day of redemption.

Reynolds' commentary, though homiletic, contains many critical remarks, explanations of idioms, &c., and not only surpasses all English expositions on Ecclesiastes which preceded it, but will bear comparison with those which have succeeded it.

1647.—Whilst homiletic commentaries were now being multiplied in England, Germany continued to furnish us with critical expositions; and the elaborate work of Geier on Coheleth will always be an honour to its age.¹ Geier, however, is satisfied with the old opinion that *Solomon's design in this book is partly to confess the vanity of those things which he had formerly been so fond of, to his utter ruin, and partly to deter others from the like fondness of vanities, and to lead them to the true sovereign good, which is the fear of God.*² He also divides the book into two principal parts, though he differs from his predecessors in making the first part, which shews wherein happiness does not consist, to extend from i. 1 to ix. 18; and the second part, shewing wherein true happiness does consist, to extend from x. to xii. 14.

¹ In Salomonis Regis Israel Ecclesiasten Commentarius Martini Geieri, Lipsiæ, 1647; editio quarta, Lipsiæ, 1791, is the one we have used.

² Scopus denique, Salomoni in hoc librò præfixus, fuit, partim confessionem edere vanitatum cum damno hætenus tractatarum, partim alios omnes simili vanitatum sectatione deterrere, atque ad verum summum bonum adducere, nempe ad *Timorem Dei*, p. 5, vi.

The following is the tabular view which Geier gives of the argument of Ecclesiastes:—

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Ecclesiastes the Preacher | I. Κατ' ἀφαιρῶν, or the remonstration. The things in which happiness does not consist because of the instability of | from his own experience, { not in knowledge, chap. i. nor in pleasure, chap. ii. |
| | | Time, being changeable, chap. iii. |
| | | Persons, { being unjust, because { invidious, their cha- { and avaricious, } chap. iv. racter { king impious, and rich, } chap. v. |
| | | Things, { Riches which absolutely, chap. vi. being un- { are contracted comparatively, chap. vii. certain, { Administra- human, chap. viii. viz., { tion } divine, chap. ix. |
| | II. Κατὰ Σί- σιν, or the position wherein happiness does consist. | in uprightness towards superiors, chap. x. in benevolence towards the poor, chap. xi. in piety towards God, chap. xii. |

Geier's commentary contains much that is critically valuable.

1647.—It is not surprising that Lightfoot, who declared himself a mere child in Hebrew and Rabbinical learning, in

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Ecclesiastes concinnatur. | I. Κατ' ἀφαίρεσιν seu remotionem, quâ in re non consistat felicitas; ubi de vanitate, quam Salomo observavit in rebus | suis, quæ partim in { Scientia, cap. i. Usu rerum variat, cap. ii. |
| | | Temporum conversiones, cap. iii. |
| | | Personarum { injustorum, avarorum, } cap. iv. mores, ut { regum, impiorum, divitum, } cap. v. |
| | | Rerum in- { Divitiarum, quæ simpliciter, cap. vi. certitud. { tractantur comparatè, cap. vii. ut, { Administrationis humanæ, cap. viii. divinæ, cap. ix. |
| | II. Κατὰ Σίσιν seu positionem, quod felicitas consistat in | probitate erga superiores, cap. x. caritate erga proximum egenum, cap. xi. pietate erga Deum, cap. xii. |

comparison with Hugh Broughton, adopted the singular view of the latter, that *the design of Coheleth is to shew that the kingdom promised to David is not of this world*. In his "Chronicle of the Times, and the Order of the Texts of the Old Testament," which appeared in 1647, Lightfoot says, upon —

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES.

After his great fall, Solomon recovereth again by repentance, and writeth this book of Ecclesiastes, as his penitential dirge for that his folly. He calleth himself in it *Koheleth*, or *the gathering soul*; either *recollecting itself*, or, *by admonition, gathering others*, that go astray after vanity. He sheweth in it, that all things on this side heaven are but vanity; and he had found it so by sad experience; and so the kingdom promised to David, which was to be everlasting, must not be expected to be of this world, as John xviii. 36.¹

1651. — Far superior, in a critical point of view, to everything which has hitherto been published on Ecclesiastes, is the scholarly commentary of Mercer. Like Luther and others, he maintains that *the design of this book is to shew the vanity of human affairs, studies, projects, and dispositions, and to condemn the restless anxiety and fickleness of man; and, having drawn us away from these, to invite us to the contemplation of lofty realities, to the fear of God, and to the keeping of his commandments*. It moreover teaches us *to enjoy present things with a calm and grateful heart, without anxiety and solicitude, which Christ also teaches*.²

Without being tedious in detailing the various opinions of others, Mercer's commentary is a storehouse of Rabbinical and other varied learning, which this learned expositor does not

¹ Comp. his Works, vol. ii., p. 205, Pitman's edition.

² *Scopus hujus libri et institutum est rerum humanarum, studiorum, consiliorum et affectuum vanitatem ostendere, ac irrequietam humanorum animorum curiositatem et inconstantiam damnare; deinde nos ab ea subvehere ad rerum sublimium considerationem, ad timorem et judicium Domini ac observationem ejus mandatorum, ut ad extremum libri concludit דבר סוף, finis verbi, &c.* Interim etiam docet rebus presentibus pacatè et tranquillè frui cum gratiarum actione sine anxietate et solitudine; ut Christus etiam docuit. — Joannis Merceri Commentarii in Jobum, et Salomonis Proverbia, Ecclesiasten, Canticum Canticorum. Amsterdam, 1651, p. 618.

quote to parade his learning, but thoroughly examines, and shews what is feasible and what is not. Mercer's commentary is as much a repository of Rabbinical lore, as the commentaries of the Jesuits Lorinus, Pineda, and A. Lapide are of Patristic and mediæval literature, without the prolixity of the latter.

1653. — The second English commentary on the entire Bible is that of "John Mayer, Doctor in Divinity." Though our English divine espouses the old view of the design of this book, yet he puts it into a somewhat different shape. *Here, he says, are observations touching the vanities of this world, and sentences uttered hereupon, partly as the author hereof, Solomon, thought in the time of his vanity, and partly after that, by repentance, he rose up again, persuading to the fear of God, and to the keeping of his commandments*.¹

Mayer's commentary is brief, but terse and lucid, and by no means deserves to be so very scarce.

1654. — The ecclesiastical administration, directed by the tyrannical William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, had driven some of the most pious and learned divines to seek an asylum in the American wilderness. "There, a few resolute Puritans — who, in the cause of their religion, feared neither the rage of the ocean nor the hardship of uncivilised life; neither the fangs of savage beasts nor the tomahawks of more savage men — had built, amidst the primeval forests, villages which are now great and opulent cities, but which have, through every change, retained some trace of the character derived from their founders."² There, too, these uncompromising Puritans have raised to themselves monuments of piety and learning, which neither the corroding power of time nor the mighty deeds of valour could destroy or overtop. Among the number of those who sought a refuge in New England, in 1633, was the eminent John Cotton, who, besides many other works, wrote an exposition

¹ A Commentary upon the Holy Writings of Job, David, and Solomon, &c., by John Mayer, Doctor in Divinity, London, 1653, p. 771.

² Macaulay, History of England, vol. i., p. 92.

on Ecclesiastes, which was published in London, 1654, two years after the death of the author, by his fellow minister, Dr. Tuckney.¹ Cotton maintains that *the design of this book is to describe the corruption of all things, in order to bring us to Christ, as portrayed in the Canticles*. This learned divine submits that —

The way to stir us up to seek after Christ is to behold and be convinced of the vanity of all things here below. When Eve brought forth Cain, she hoped she had got the promised seed (Gen. iv. 1 with iii. 15). But when she saw by his spirit and carriage that she was deceived in him, she called her next son Abel (Gen. iv. 2), which signifieth *vanity*. And so she must see all things to be before she bring forth Seth, the father of the promised seed. Now Abel, or *vanity*, expresseth the state of all the creatures by the fall. And Solomon taketh up Eve's word, and amplifieth it; *Vanity, yea vanity of vanities*. So this whole book is a commentary upon the state of corruption (Rom. viii. 20). A fit introduction to Christ in the Canticles.

He, too, divides the book into two parts; the first part shews, "that the chief good of the sons of men is not to be found in all the creatures under the sun, nor in man's labours and ways about them, for they are all vanity and vexation of spirit; and the second part shews, that it is to be found in the fear of God and the keeping of his commandments." Cotton's remarks upon chap. i. 2, which contains the argument of the first part of the book, is a literary curiosity, and shews how successfully the hair-splitting logic of the old country was transplanted into the New World.

Chap. i. 2, *Vanity of vanities, &c.* — Here is set forth —

i. The condition of all things, by the adjunct of *vanity*, *all is vanity*; and this is amplified by many ornaments of rhetoric.

1. *An hyperbole*, VANITY ITSELF; for, Vain.

2. *Polyptoton*, VANITY OF VANITIES.

3. *Epizeuxis*, (the like sound continued in the same sentence,) VANITY OF VANITIES.

¹ A brief exposition, with practical observations, upon the whole book of Ecclesiastes, by John Cotton. Published by Anthony Tuckney, D.D., Master of St. John's College in Cambridge, London, 1654. Second impression, corrected, London, 1657, is the edition we have used.

4. *Anadiplosis*, (the same sound repeated in the end of one sentence, and the beginning of the other,) VANITY OF VANITIES, VANITY, &c.
 5. *Epanalepsis*, (the same sound repeated in the beginning of the sentence, and in the end,) VANITY, &c., ALL IS VANITY.
 6. *Anaphora*, (the same sound repeated in the beginning of the sentences,) VANITY, &c., VANITY, &c.
 7. *Epistrophe*, (the same sound repeated in the end of the sentences,) OF VANITIES, &c., OF VANITIES.
 8. *Epanodos*, (the same sound repeated in the beginning and midst, in the midst and end,) VANITY, VANITY, VANITY.
 9. *Numerus oratorious*, (the same number of syllables repeated in both sentences,) VANITY OF VANITIES, VANITY OF VANITIES.
 10. *Olimax*, (the same sound continued and increased by degrees,) VANITY OF VANITIES, VANITY OF VANITIES, &c.
 11. *Paranomasia*, (the repeating of like sounds, yet somewhat different.)
- ii. This confirmed by the testimony of Coheleth, saith the Preacher.

1655. — John Richardson, bishop of Ardagh, who furnished the notes on Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Minor Prophets, for the *second* edition of the Assembly's Annotations,¹ published in 1655 a volume of "Choice Observations and Explanations" upon the entire Old Testament, "containing in them," as he modestly tells us, "many remarkable matters, either not taken notice of or mistaken by most," which he intended as "Additionals to the large Annotations made by some of the Assembly of Divines."² But, notwithstanding the promises made on the title-page, as far as Ecclesiastes is concerned, this prelate simply repeats what Bishop Reynolds has said in the Assembly's Annotations, which it pretends to supplement.

1657. — Twelve months after the appearance of the preceding works, Sir Edward Leigh, the well-known author of the *Critica Sacra*, and Annotations on the New Testament, issued a thin folio of annotations on the five poetical books of the Old Testament, viz., Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 144, note 1.

² Choice Observations and Explanations upon the Old Testament, &c. London, 1656.

Canticles, "being encouraged in the publication thereof by the epistle of a grave and reverend divine (John Trapp), who hath honoured him with the patronage of a late learned work of his that way." The baronet thinks that *the subject of this book is to set forth the vanity of the creature in reference to the satisfaction of the souls of men.* "God set up two great lights in Solomon's heart, one shewing the excellency of Christ, in the Canticles, the other, the vanity of the creature, as in Ecclesiastes."¹ It will be remembered that Cotton propounds the same view. Leigh's commentary only occupies twelve pages of the work, and is necessarily very meagre.

1658. — Less pretentious, but more lucid, than Leigh's, is the commentary of Arthur Jackson on Ecclesiastes, contained in his annotations upon the same five books.² This Nonconformist divine thoroughly espouses the view propounded by his predecessors, that *the book is Solomon's penitential dirge.* Though Jackson has been anticipated by several English commentators,—for he truly remarks, in his epistle to the reader, "When I first undertook this work of writing these Annotations upon the Scriptures, there was not, as I remember, any piece of this kind extant in English, save only the Geneva marginal notes,"—his commentary could not have been well spared at that period, since it possesses several excellencies; it is brief, and generally very much to the purpose.

1659. — Dissatisfied with the method, hitherto adopted, of vindicating Solomon from the heterodox sentiments contained in this book, by either putting them into the mouth of infidels, or by affirming that he entertained them prior to his repentance, Dr. Gell saw no other alternative but to allegorise the difficult passages. Hence, in his elaborate essay toward the emendation

¹ Annotations on the five poetical books of the Old Testament, &c., by Edward Leigh. London, 1657, p. 157.

² Annotations upon the five books immediately following the historical part of the Old Testament, commonly called the five doctrinal or poetical books, to wit, the book of Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, by Arthur Jackson. London, 1658.

of the authorised version, a folio of eight hundred and five pages, he thus explains —

Chap. ix. 9. — *Enjoy life with the wife which thou hast loved, &c.* — The wife here means our *memory and thoughts.* And an excellent portion it is in *this vain life*, that with our *wife*, our *memory and thoughts*, we may *see and enjoy the divine life*, and the *words of life*, and *keep the words of life in our heart and in our soul* all the days of our *vain life*. For unless thus, or in the like manner, the advice of Solomon be understood, a sensual Epicurean might make notable use of it, to confirm himself in his voluptuousness.¹

Yet this essay displays great learning on the part of the author, and was so highly esteemed, that it was translated into German shortly after its appearance in England.

1660. — "The grave and reverend divine," Trapp, who encouraged Sir Edward Leigh to publish his volume on the poetical books, now issued a commentary on the same books himself. According to this Puritan divine, this book contains *Solomon's sapiential sermon of the sovereign good, and how to obtain to it.* "How many several opinions there were amongst them concerning *the chief good* in Solomon's days is uncertain; divers of these he confuteth in this book, and that from his own experience, the best school-dame."² This shews that Trapp resorted to the old expedient of putting the objectionable passages into the mouth of heretics, with which Gell was displeased. Both Trapp and Mayer published commentaries on the entire Bible; the former illustrates the meaning of Scripture by numerous anecdotes and parallels from profane history, whilst the latter gives a lucid digest of the opinions of those who have preceded him, in addition to his own judicious remarks. We could never understand why these commentaries have been allowed to become so extremely scarce, and modern expositions of a much inferior character to usurp their place.

¹ An Essay toward the Amendment of the last English translation of the Bible, by Robert Gell, D.D. London, 1659, pp. 642, 643.

² A Commentary upon the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, by John Trapp. London, 1660, p. 217.

1664.—The celebrated Cornelius Jansenius, bishop of Ypres,—whose immortal work, called *Augustinus*, inflicted such a wound on the Romish Church as neither the power nor wisdom of its pontiffs will ever be able to heal,—wrote a commentary on Ecclesiastes, which was published, together with his annotations on other portions of the Bible, in 1664, six years after the death of the author.¹ After finding fault with Luther for denying the Solomonic authorship, the prelate maintains that *the design of the book is as St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Jerome have declared it, viz., to incite us to condemn the world, and to raise our minds to the super-sensible.*²

1666.—Dr. John Smith, a member of the Royal College of Physicians, published in 1666³ a very curious critico-anatomical treatise upon the six former verses of the twelfth chapter of Coheleth, in which he endeavours to shew that Solomon was thoroughly conversant with all the modern discoveries of anatomy, as well as with the circulation of the blood. After describing the Harveian theory of the circulation, the Doctor remarks:—

This is the true doctrine of the excellency and motion of the blood, and of the use of the heart and the parts appertaining thereunto; all which were perfectly known to Solomon, as will abundantly appear anon, in the explication of the symptoms we are now about. Yet it pleased the Lord that this knowledge should, with the possessor of it, sink into dust and darkness, where it lay buried for the space of two thousand five hundred years at the least, till it was retrieved thencefrom by the wisdom and industry of that incomparable and for ever to be renowned Dr. William Harvey, the greatest honour of our nation, and of all societies of which he was a member.⁴

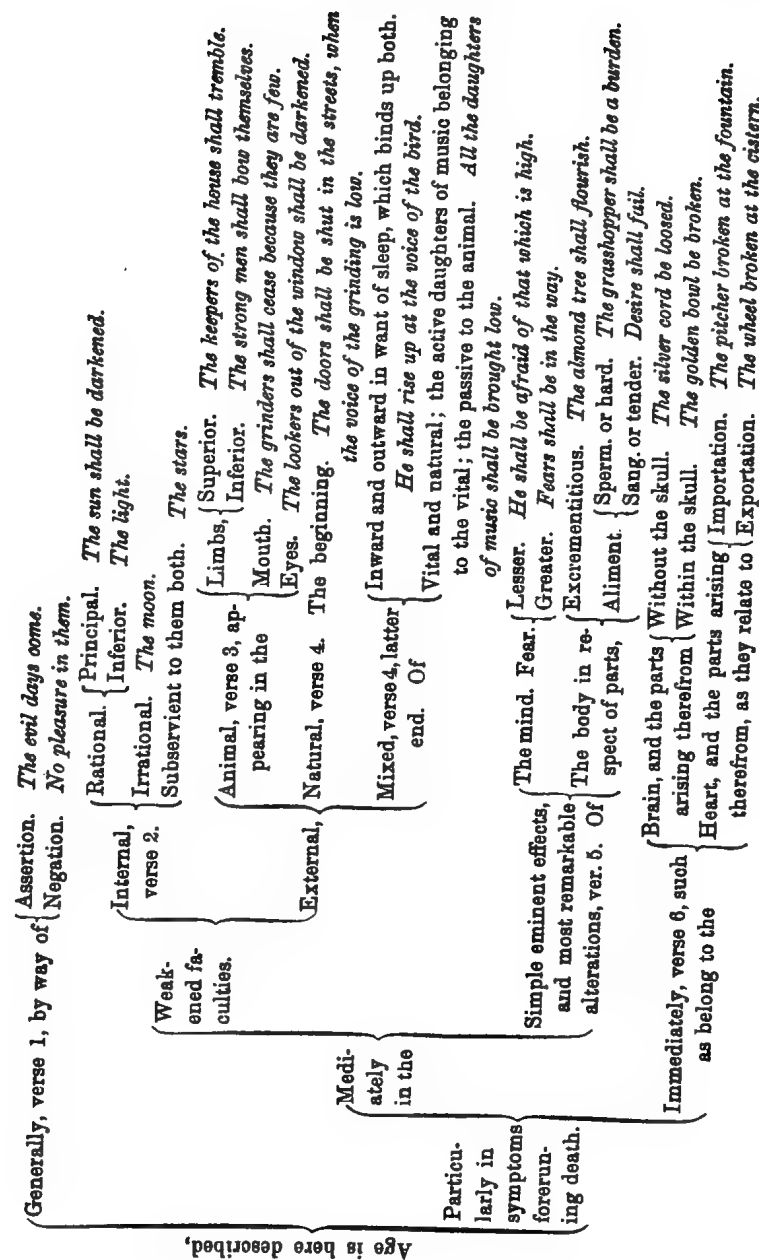
The following is his analysis of the six verses:—

¹ Cornelii Jansenii Episcopi quondam Iprensis Analecta in Proverbia, Ecclesiasten Sapientiam, Habacuc, Sophoniam. Lovanii, 1644, editio secunda, 1673.

² Scopus et argumentum totius libri est, ut breviter expressit S. Gregorius Nyssenus Serm. i. in Ecclesiasten, mentem suprâ sensum attollere, hoc est, ut inquit Hieronymus ad contemptum mundi homines provocare, p. 117.

³ The Portrait of Old Age, wherein is contained a sacred anatomy both of soul and body, and a perfect account of the infirmities of age incident to them both, by John Smith, of the College of Physicians. London, 1666, third edition, 1752.

⁴ Page 206.



Pool, in whose house Dr. Smith died, thought so highly of this production that he introduced the substance of it into his Synopsis.

1680.—An anonymous commentary appeared in 1680, in London, which is unquestionably the most extraordinary production on Coheleth. *Solomon*, we are told, *in the all-penetrating spirit of true prophecy, discloses here the deep things of God's divinity, and the natural and spiritual things of the first and second creation, what each amounted to. He, like other awakened spiritual saints, infallibly prophesies or foretells what will become of any men or angels to eternity (as found rebelliously fixing in their first-creation life and state of vanity, or obediently surrendering it for the second) in eternal life or death.*

The following is a specimen of this commentary upon chapter iv. :—

VERSE 9.—*Two are better than one ; because they have a good reward for their labour.*

The birth of new creature life, in the true saint, makes, with his natural man, *the two that are better than one* ; or than the natural man, single and alone, however perfect, *wise, strong, honourable, and glorious*. The natural man of the saint, is by his spiritual man (under and with the fountain-spirit of life in Christ) fetched up, by way of death and resurrection, into the everlasting life of the spiritual, in lieu of its fading natural. This completed, the whole person is spiritual. *I live, yet not I, but Christ in me*, says Paul (Gal. ii. 20). He had *the two, better than one* ; he, and the Spirit of Christ. By the death of nature, as to its own law-life, and quickening of it up into Christ's gospel-life, the Spirit of Christ lives in the whole saint, and he in it, as his Ruler, Lord, and King. But man alone, in his own nature, however wise and righteous, will find himself at length not only destitute of, but in unchangeable enmity to, that spirit of Christ, in which alone any can be saved. The natural man, in his own uncrucified will and self-chosen course therein, remains single and alone, to his final ruin. The reason why the said *two are better than one* is, *because they have a good reward for their labour*. Man, fixed in his own life and way, and so in enmity to God ; what reward can he expect but final wrath, as *the meet recompense of his error* ! On the obedient death of nature (in which it is impossible to please God in anything) is man raised into that life of grace, in which it is as impossible not to please him in everything. *The reward* of this will be the full enjoyment and clear vision of God for ever.

VERSE 10.—*For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow ; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth : for he hath not another to help him up.*

The gospel-spirit of Christ, in the saint, takes his whole natural man (partly crucified and partly not) into its care and protection. And so the fountain, gospel-spirit, in Christ himself, takes the whole man of the saint into its protection, under the covering shadow and cherishing influence of its *twofold cherubim-wings*, as also under the joint regard and care of his infinite and almighty Divinity. The saint is deeply concerned, in this case, when Christ has committed to him (set up in him, and entrusted him with, his unspeakable spiritual gift or life) that unchangeable good thing, to recommit that and himself back again to Christ, for the nourishing, strengthening, and encouraging it, against all the counterworkings of his rebellious, and (in part) uncrucified natural mind or man, which will, to its last gasp, without any interruption, fight against God, and his spiritual mind. Till all the mystical nerves and bones thereof be cut asunder and broken, all the life and strength thereof utterly extinguished and abolished, is it a perpetual warrior against the spirit of Christ, in himself and saints. *Paul found this fleshly foe of his own house, this carnal mind of enmity*, about him, long after his gospel-conversion and true spiritual saintship (Rom. vii. 17, 23). On this he cries out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death ?* (v. 24.) This enemy within the saint, till fully run down into death, exposes him to frequent slips and sore miscarriages, as in *Solomon* and other saints has been evident. But, *that that is born of God, in them, and never sins, recovers their falling*, miscarrying natural man, or spirit (by a gradual and at length total death-work thereof, upon it) into harmony with itself, Christ, and God most high, in *a newness of life*, for evermore. *This war of spirit against flesh* (Gal. v. 17), is not finished but by the total death of *the fleshly mind*. *Flesh* will not leave off fighting till dead, and therefore ought not spirit (or the spiritual man in the saint) to leave off fighting while anything of life is left in it. The continually sinning natural spirit, till fully crucified, will, in the course of its own will, need *daily forgiveness, as well as an offending brother*, even to *seventy times seven* (Matt. xviii. 21, 22). Through the *propitiatory, covering mercy-seat*, which spiritual life brings the saints under, God so looks on his obedient spiritual man, as not to impute to him the daily sins of his natural man (Rom. iv. 7, 8). Thus is the spiritual man also under Christ as a *covering shadow* to the natural, in the same person, and qualified to *help up* or recover it out of all its failings and *backsliding steps*. The spiritual man, under the holy anointing, is to the decayed, *old, grey-headed*, crucified natural, *the fresh oil David prayed for* (Ps. lxxi. 9, 18), that gives a new verdure and fresh lustre to the whole person of the saint—a *glory that excels and remains* for ever. Thus, on all accounts, to wit, the sins of the guilty natural spirit (or the mystical *grey hairs*, decays, *old age* and death, brought upon it by the demolishing, crucifying-work of Christ and the spiritual, as its only cure) the spiritual is ready at hand to *help it up* out of

all falls in his lifetime, and out of that grave or death that extinguishes all power of sinning or falling in him. Christ and the spiritual man fetch him up into an everlasting harmony with them, in their newness of life.

T. — But was to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

Here is the deplorable condition of all fixed in the life of nature, and so in unchangeable enmity to the spirit of grace, that is the only meet helper and lifter up of the natural spirit out of all its falls. Submitting to the death of the natural man is the only way by which the saint receives that spiritual life that can help it at all dead lifts out of its falls, and out of that death (that is the only cure of all evil in it) into its never-sinful life. When man chooses his fading creature-life before God's, and God, in judgment on him, gives him his choice, or *chooses his delusions* (Isa. lxi. 4), who can help him up? *If God be against him, who can be for him?* Himself he cannot help. He is gone, then, on all hands. All that finally refuse the terms of receiving the spirit of grace reject it. And all that wilfully reject it *God will reject*, with all their false confidences in their own. *He will swear in wrath, they shall never enter into his rest.* What then can they say or do? or any other for them? who will or can help them up, when fallen under the final wrath of God?

VERSE 11. — Again, if two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone?

The natural man of the saint receives light and warmth from the spiritual, as fast as baptised, transformed, and raised into a marriage-union with it in its life, and so made an equal yoke-fellow to it, under Christ's most easy and delightful yoke or government over both. As fast as the natural and spiritual man of the saint come to a right conjugal union, as *of twain made one new man*, the whole saint and Christ do lie in the intimate embraces of conjugal love, with mutual delight and satisfaction in one another, for ever. A most comfortable spiritual warmth and cherishing influence from Christ does the saint find in this mystical marriage-union with him, figured by the literal marriage-union (Eph. v. 22. 32). Christ and the saint are *one spirit; as man and wife, one flesh* (1 Cor. vi. 16, 17). *Christ is head to all saints, and every saint; they members of his mystical body, flesh, and bones.* So is Christ's spiritual state of life and headship, and saints' relation to him therein, expressed in the very words of the figurative literal headship and relation of the man to the woman. The marriage-union of the saint with Christ, and their mutual love therein, is indissoluble and everlasting, because founded in a spirit of everlasting righteousness and love. Saints are everlastingly subject, and most delightfully obedient to him; and he most delightfully kind to them beyond all words for ever.

1683. — Matthew Pool, however, returned to the old view, that *Solomon wrote this book in his old age, as a public testimony*

of his repentance and detestation of all those vain and wicked courses to which he had addicted himself, wherein he followed the example of his father David, who after his fall penned the fifty-first Psalm. He also divides the book into two parts, viz., *negative and positive*, and accounts for the heterodox sentiments by saying "that Solomon speaks some and most things in his own name, but some other things in the name and according to the opinion of worldly and ungodly men."¹

1691. — According to Sebastian Schmidt,² *the design of Coheleth, which is given in the twelfth chapter, is, 1. To call man away from the vain things of this life, wherein he centres his*

¹ Annotations upon the Holy Bible, &c., 2 vols. fol. London, 1683-1685, vol. i. Introduction to Ecclesiastes. These annotations, however, were not all written by this eminent Nonconformist; he died when he reached the fifty-ninth chapter of Isaiah. The following is a list of the several portions of the Bible, and the names of those who commented upon them:—

| | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Genesis to Isaiah, i. — lviii. | Matthew Pool. | Romans | Mr. Mayo. |
| Isaiah lix. and lx. | Mr. Jackson of Mousley, son of Arthur Jackson, and corrector of the first edition of Pool's Synopses. | The Epistles to Corinthians .. | Dr. Collins. |
| Isaiah lxi. — lxvi. | Dr. Collins. | Galatians | Mr. Veal. |
| Jeremiah | Dr. Collins. | Ephesians | Mr. Adams. |
| Lamentations .. | Mr. Hurst. | Philippians | Mr. Adams. |
| Ezekiel | Mr. Hurst. | Colossians | Mr. Barker. |
| Minor Prophets | Mr. Cooper. | Thessalonians .. | Mr. Barker. |
| Daniel | Mr. Cooper. | Timothy | Dr. Collins. |
| Matthew | Dr. Collins. | Titus | Dr. Collins. |
| Mark | Dr. Collins. | Philemon | Mr. Obadiah Hughes. |
| Luke | Dr. Collins. | Hebrews | Mr. Obadiah Hughes. |
| John | Dr. Collins. | Of James | Mr. Veal. |
| Acts | Mr. Vinke. | Peter | Mr. Veal. |
| | | Jude | Mr. Veal. |
| | | John | Mr. Howe. |
| | | Revelation | Dr. Collins. |

² *Scopus hujus libri manifestè habetur in fine cap. xii. scilicet (1) advocare à vanitatibus quibuscunque hujus mundi, in quibus aliqua hominis beatitudo collocatur: cap. xii. 8 et (2) à variis autoribus profanis, qui ad vanam mundi beatitudinem deducunt extra scripturam sacram. ver. 12, tandem vero (3) adducere ad timorem Dei, observationem præceptorum ejus nominatim etiam in pio hujus mundi cum lætâ conscientia usu, judicii extremi meditationem, præmiumque sanctorum in altera vita, vers. pen. et ult. Commentarius in librum Solomonis regis, hebr. Koheleth, græc. et lat. Ecclesiastes dictum. Argentor. 1691. My edition is 1704.*

happiness (xii. 8); 2. *From those profane teachers who lead him to indulge in the vain happiness of this world, contrary to the Sacred Scriptures* (verse 12); and 3. *To lead him to the fear of God and the keeping of his commandments* (13, 14).

Schmidt divides the book into *five parts* or sections:¹—

i. (Chap. i. 1), The title of the book, which, being so very short, can hardly be called a division.

ii. (Chap. i. 2—iii. 12), wherein Solomon gives his exposition of true happiness; a. *negative*, by refuting that which is false, and centred in the things of this world without God (i. 2—iii. 11), and b. *positive*, by shewing that it consists in the fear of God, and in the hope of a future life (iii. 12–14).

iii. (Chap. iii. 15—iv. 16), wherein six examples are given from human life, through which man may be prevented from securing this highest good.

iv. (Chap. iv. 17—xii. 8) gives lessons respecting the true service of God and a happy life, in fourteen rules of life.

v. (Chap. xii. 9–14), this last section gives the epilogue.

¹ *Partes Libri Ecclesiastæ sunt quinque. i. Titulus: qui quidem adeo brevis, ut vix possit pars dici, cap. i. 1.*

ii. *Summi boni expositio: per summi boni falsi, in rebus hujus mundi positi, extra Deum, remotionem à ver. 2, cap. i. ad cap. iii. 12, et veri simul in Deo et pietate alteram vitam sperante positi insinuationem, cap. iii. 12–14. Removetur falsum, tum asserendo falsitatem: tum probando, quia omnia in mundo vana sunt. Ubi I. Salomonis de vanitate totius mundi propositio sive assertio, cap. i. 2. II. Ejusdem probatio [sumta (1.) Ex conscientie humanæ compellatæ testimonio, ver. 3. (2.) À vanitatis rerum demonstratione: tum perpetuarum, ver. 4–7, tum transeuntium, laborisque omnis rerum, ver. 8–11, tum actionum atque laborum hominum, quæ probatur (1.) Autoritate Salomonis, ver. 12, 13. (2.) Explicatione vanitatis ipsius earum, quæ duplex est: prior, imperfectæ in se bonitatis, ver. 14, et prolixè exponitur à ver. 16, inclus. cap. i. usque ad cap. iii. 1, exclus. posterior, impossibilis sine Deo operationis, ver. 15, deduciturque à ver. 1, cap. iii. usque ad ver. 12 exclus.] à ver. 7, cap. i. usque ad cap. iii. 12 exclus.*

iii. (Pars) *Monstratio sani Judicii* de variis in vita humana casibus, quibus offendi homo et ab amplexu expositi veri summi boni absterreri potest: quorum imprimis vi. sunt à ver. 15, inclus. cap. iii. usque ad cap. iv. 17 exclus.

iv. *De cultu Dei et beata hoc in mundo vita informatio: constans doctrinis* xiv. à ver. 17, inclus. cap. iv. usque ad cap. xii. 9 exclus.

v. *Ultima est Epilogus* à ver. 9 cap. xii. usque ad finem libri. — *Commentarius in librum Salomonis regis, &c., p. 11.*

1694. — In 1694, more than forty years after the death of the author, appeared Alexander Nisbet's exposition on Ecclesiastes.¹ Nisbet was one of those Scotch divines who felt the want of a national commentary to represent the doctrines of their Church, and formed a plan to this effect with Mr. Robert Douglas, Mr. Rutherford, Mr. Robert Blair, Mr G. Hutcheson, Mr. James Ferguson, Mr. James Durham, Mr. John Smith, &c., all of whom had particular books allotted to them.² But the work was never completed. Mr. Warner, in his Epistle to the Reader, prefixed to Nisbet's commentary, accounts for its being published so long after the author's death. "It was perfected," says he, "and made ready for the press before his death, and had long since come abroad into the world, if it had not been for some assertions the author had upon chap. viii. 4, concerning obedience to supreme powers, which did not relish with the late times, wherein supremacy and absolute power were screwed up to the greatest height."

However, Biblical exegesis did not sustain any very great loss in consequence of this commentary being hid from the public for so many years, as will be seen from the view which Nisbet takes of Coheleth. *Solomon, according to this Scotch divine, being restored again, is Ecclesiastes, a penitent soul, preaching his repentance to the Church; THE MESSIAH, the true Solomon, who was known by the title, SON OF DAVID, is now speaking to the same by his type.* "The scope of the Spirit of God, by this divine preacher, being to point out to miserable fallen man the way to recover his lost happiness, he doth *first* proceed *negatively*, to convince him wherein it cannot be found" (chap. i. 2—iv. 12), and *second*, "gives directions for attaining to that true peace and quietness which is attainable in this life" (chap. vi. — xii. 14).

1700. — Bishop Patrick restricts the design of the book to

¹ *An Exposition, with practical observations upon the book of Ecclesiastes. Edinburgh, 1694.*

² *Comp. Gillies, Hist., col. 1, 296.*

what is said in chap. xii. 13, viz., *fear God, and keep his commandments*, this is the happiness of man, or the chief good. "The sense of the whole sermon, as we may call it," says this excellent prelate, "seems to be comprehended in this syllogism—

Whatsoever is vain and perishing cannot make man happy ;
But all men's designs here in this world are vain and perishing ;
Therefore they cannot, prosecuting such designs, make themselves happy."

The bishop, though agreeing with most of his predecessors that the book is to be divided into two parts, makes each part to consist of *six* chapters. He also maintains "that those words which seem to countenance men in the neglect of religion, and to open a gap to licentiousness, are only opinions which he intends to confute according to the method he had propounded to himself in this book. Wherein he first represents the various ends men drive at, which in the very entrance of it (that men might not mistake his meaning) he pronounces to be so vain, that he had no words significant enough to express their vanity ; and then their different opinions about God and His providence, and their own souls." ¹

1701.—Maintaining that this book is a treatise upon the highest good, F. Yeard, dean of Achonry, was dissatisfied with the method hitherto pursued of making *Solomon* repeat the heterodox sentiments, and hence endeavoured to prove, in his paraphrase upon *Ecclesiastes*,² that *the preacher introduces a refined sensualist, or a sensual worldling, who interrupts him, in order to attack and ridicule his doctrine*. Of course, these impertinent interruptions and impudent mockeries, in which this sensualist indulges at the expense of no less a personage than King *Solomon*, are introduced and cut short whenever and wherever the Dean thinks it proper.

¹ A Critical Commentary and Paraphrase on the Old and New Testament, by Patrick, Lowth, Oswald, Whitby, and Lowman. 4 vols., London, 1848, vol. iii., pp. 112, 118.

² A paraphrase upon *Ecclesiastes*, &c., by F. Yeard, Dean of Achonry. London, 1701.

1703.—A decided approach towards developing the true design of *Cohleth* is to be seen in the treatise of Du Hamel. *The design of Ecclesiastes is*,¹ he says, *to collect the different opinions of men, and the different reflections whereby the mind is wont to be agitated concerning the end of the righteous and the wicked, and to set forth, at the conclusion of the book, what we ought to think respecting it. He says we should also hear the end of his discourse, viz., fear God and keep His commandments, for in this consists the whole duty of man, in this is every blessing, in this is happiness. This is the main object of the book ; the other things are introduced, as it is generally done in a dissertation or disquisition, and are for the most part the opinions of the great mass of the people. He sometimes seems to assent to the opinions of others, but instantly refutes them, being fully convinced of this one thing, that happiness must be sought in God alone, that created things cannot render us happy, that they are vain and full of instability.*

1710.—As might be expected, Matthew Henry adheres to the old traditional view, which he expresses in his own quaint manner. *Ecclesiastes*, he tells us, *is a penitential and practical sermon, the text or doctrine is, VANITY OF VANITIES, ALL IS VANITY* (chap. i. 1) ; and the use and application of it by way of exhortation is, *that we are to REMEMBER OUR CREATOR, TO FEAR HIM, AND TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. The scope of the book is to shew that our happiness consists not in being as gods to ourselves, to HAVE what we will, and DO what we will, but in having him*

¹ Hoc *Ecclesiastæ* fuit propositum, ut varias hominum opiniones et varias quibus animus agitari solet cogitationes circa fines bonorum et malorum colligeret ac tandem quid sentiendum sit in calce libri proponeret. Finem, inquit, loquendi pariter audiamus, Deum time et mandata ejus observa, hoc est enim omnis homo, hoc est omne hominis bonum, hæc ejus felicitas. Ea est summa libri, reliqua instar dissertationis aut disquisitionis ac plerumque juxta vulgi sententiam proferuntur. Interdum aliorum opinionibus videtur assentiri, sed statim eas refellit; id unum omnino persuasus, felicitatem in Deo uno quæri oportere, res creatas nos beare non posse, vanas esse et inconstantie plenas. Salomon, ii., iii., cum annot. Rotomagi, 1703.

that made us to be a God to us.¹ Like his predecessors, he divides this sermon into two parts, viz., a *negative* and *positive*, and puts the objectionable passages into the mouth of atheists and epicures.

1718. — Having experienced the vanity of all things, by being suddenly hurled from a high position of honour and trust to a state of degradation, the celebrated Matthew Prior betook himself, from a fellow-feeling, to write upon the adventures of the royal preacher, and produced the admirable poem, *Solomon on the Vanity of the World*. With the poetic and literary merits of this production we have nothing to do. That question has long since been decided by a far more competent and appropriate tribunal. Our object is to give the author's idea of the design of the book. Prior's opinion is, that *Solomon teaches us not to repine at the miseries of life, which are ordained by Omnipotence, and from which the richest, the wisest, and the greatest of men was not exempt, but to submit to God's providence, and cheerfully to look forward to death as a release from a life replete with vanities and miseries.*

The pleasures of life, says he, do not compensate for the miseries; age steals upon us unawares, and death, as the only cure of our ills, ought to be expected, but not feared. This instruction is to be illustrated by the action of some great person. Who, therefore, more proper for the business than Solomon himself? and why may he not be supposed now to repeat, what, we take for granted, he acted almost three thousand years since? If, in the fair situation where this prince was placed, he was acquainted with sorrow; if, endowed with the greatest perfections of nature, and possessed of all the advantages of external condition, he could not find happiness; the rest of mankind may safely take the monarch's word for the truth of what he asserts.

Prior makes the whole poem a soliloquy, divided into three books; the first shewing the insufficiency of knowledge, the second of pleasure, and the third of power. "Solomon is the person that speaks; he is at once the hero and the author; but

¹ An Exposition of the Old and New Testament, &c., by Matthew Henry, 3 vols. London, 1828, vol. ii., p. 682.

he tells us very often what others say to him. Those chiefly introduced are his rabbis and philosophers in the first book, and his women with their attendants in the second; with these sacred history mentions him to have conversed, as likewise with the angel brought down in the third book to help him out of his difficulties, or at least to teach him how to overcome them."

The following is the concluding advice given by the angel, and embodies the lesson of the whole:—

Now, Solomon, remembering who thou art,
Act through the remnant life a decent part;
Go forth, be strong; with patience and with care
Perform and suffer; to thyself severe,
Gracious to others, thy desires suppressed,
Diffused thy virtues, first of men, be best.
Thy sum of duty let two words contain,
O, may they graven in thy heart remain!
Be humble, and be just. The angel said:
With upward speed his agile wings he spread,
Whilst on the holy ground I prostrate lay,
By various doubts impelled, or to obey
Or to object; at length (my mournful look
Heavenward erect) determined thus I spoke:
Supreme, all-wise, eternal Potentate!
Sole Author, sole Disposer of our fate!
Enthroned in light and immortality,
Whom no man fully sees, and none can see!
Original of Beings, Power Divine!
Since that I live, and that I think, is thine;
Benign Creator! let thy plastic hand
Dispose its own effect; let thy command
Restore, great Father, thy instructed son,
And in my act may Thy great will be done.'

Thus Prior makes the remedy which this book yields for the ills and woes of this life, to consist in entire resignation to the will of God, and not in a future life, when all things shall be shewn to have worked together for our good. The poet, moreover, thinks that Ecclesiastes is not a regular and perfect treatise,

¹ See Prior's Poems, in Bohn's Cabinet Edition of the British Poets, vol. iii., pp. 62. 79.

but that in it great treasures are "heaped up together in a confused magnificence."

1720. — More sober than the above production, and more consistent with the subject, is the commentary of Rambach, contained in the second volume of comments published by D. J. H. Michaelis.¹ As Rambach adopted the view and even the divisions of Sebastian Schmidt, we refer the reader to page 157, where we have given an analysis of his commentary.

1723. — The idea started by Luther, that Ecclesiastes is a sort of patch-work, has been espoused by Wachter, who, however, went far beyond the great Reformer, maintaining that it consists of a medley of extracts from the different writings of Solomon, and that it is a hopeless task to search for any connection in translating it. Accordingly, he remarks upon ² —

Chap. i. 4. *One generation passeth away, &c.* — How this verse, as well as the three following, come here, is difficult to say; I leave it to those to think about it who try to shew a most beautiful connection between all the sayings in this book. They believe that these furnish a few illustrations of vanity taken from nature, and that here is the first, namely, the perishing of generations. Now that a generation passes away, and is destroyed, may indeed be called vanity. But Solomon not only speaks of passing away, but also of *coming on*, of generations, and contemplates the *perpetuam successionem*, or the perpetual succession and constant continuation of the human race. That this continuance (since one generation is always joined to the other, as if they were all one generation which departs and returns,

¹ Ueberiorum Adnotationum Philologico-exegeticarum in Hagiographos Vet. Testamenti Libros, vol. ii. Halae, 1720.

² Wie dieser Vers samt den 3 folgenden hieher gehöre, ist schwer zu sagen, ich lasse die nachdenken, die die schönste Connexion aller Aussprüche in diesem Buche zeigen wollen. Sie meynen, daß dieses einige Exempel der Eitelkeit in der Natur seyn, und zwar hier das erste, nemlich der Untergang der Geschlechter. Allein, daß ein Geschlecht dahin und untergehet, ist wohl Eitelkeit zu nennen. Salomo aber redet nicht nur vom Hingehen, sondern auch vom Kommen des Geschlechtes, und stehet eigentlich auf die perpetuam successionem oder stete Folg und immerwährende Fortsetzung des Geschlechtes der Menschen. Ob diese Beständigkeit, da immer ein Geschlecht am andern hanget, als wären sie ein Geschlecht, das weggehet und herkommet, wie die Sonne, Wind und Flüsse immerdar wiederkommen, eine Eitelkeit sey, kan ich mir nicht einbilden, und eben so wenig die Beständigkeit der Erden. — Der Prediger Salomo neu übersezt mit kurzen Anmerkungen von G(eorg) W(achter) Memmingen, 1723, pp. 3. 6. 10. 14.

just as the sun, wind, and rivers always return) should be vanity, I cannot imagine, and just as little can I imagine it of the continuance of the earth.

1726. — Calmet, like Bishop Patrick and others, restricts the design of the book to what is said in chap. xii. 13, 14. *This book,*¹ says this learned Benedictine monk, *may be considered as a discourse or harangue, wherein Solomon wishes to shew that everything in this world is only vanity and vexation of spirit, and that there is but one thing solid, one on which man may safely build, viz., the fear of God, the keeping of His commandments, and the expectation of a judgment.*

1727. — Dr. Edward Wells, so well known by his Sacred Geography, published the third volume of his paraphrase of the Old Testament, containing Ecclesiastes,² in 1727. He adopts Bishop Patrick's view, as well as his division of the book. Dr. Wells' production is a simple paraphrase of the bishop's commentary, as the former tells us himself in the introduction to the first volume. "Bishop Patrick's commentary being large, and consequently chargeable to be procured, I judged I might be of service to young students in divinity, who have not much to lay out in books, if what made the chief substance of the said bishop's commentary was reduced into a paraphrase." Dr. Wells has by no means improved upon the bishop's commentary; we do not therefore wonder that, whilst his Sacred Geography has undergone several editions, and was even translated into German, his paraphrase is little known, and scarce.

1729. — More correct, though not entirely so, is the view

¹ On peut considérer cet ouvrage comme un discours ou une harangue, dans laquelle Salomon veut prouver, que tout ce qui est dans le monde n'est que vanité et qu'affliction d'esprit, qu'il n'y a qu'une seule chose de solide et sur laquelle l'homme puisse faire quelque fond: c'est sur la crainte de Dieu, sur l'observation de ses loix, sur l'attente de ses jugemens. — Commentaire literale sur la Bible, tom. v., Paris, 1726, p. 2.

² An Help for the more easy and clear understanding of the Holy Scriptures, being the books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles. Oxford, 1727.

propounded by J. Hardouin, that *what Ecclesiastes inculcates from time to time, and to which all his maxims tend, is that the best, the most quieting, the most innocent, the most happy thing for a man in this life is to enjoy himself with his family in his repasts; to be contented with the good he may have acquired by legitimate labour, and to recognise that to be able to do this is a gift of God, which must therefore be used with thankfulness; that in this as well as in all other things he might not forget that we shall be called to the judgment bar of God.*

1731.—The learned Le Clerc advances a new theory that *Wisdom, who is the speaker in this, having gathered from the grave contemplations of human life, what is shunned and what is accomplished, pronounces by the mouth of Solomon what of this is vain.*

He makes no attempt to analyse the book, but prefixes to each chapter a brief summary of its contents. Thus he says that—

Chap. i. speaks of the emptiness of human wisdom.

ii. The emptiness of pleasure, wealth, wisdom, joy.

iii. The uncertainty of all things, the weakness of the human mind in things divine, the venality of human tribunals, the external resemblance between men and brutes.

iv. Solomon's view of oppression, of the envious, of the avaricious, and of senseless things.

v. Admonitions on the worship of God, vows, magistrates, riches.

vi. Accessory disadvantages of riches and the miseries of human life arising from disquietude; infirmities and ignorance of the human mind.

¹ Que le meilleur, c'est à dire, le plus tranquille, le plus innocent, le plus heureux, en cette vie, est de jouir soi-même avec sa famille dans ses repas, du bien qu'un travail légitime peut avoir acquis, et de reconnaître, que de le pouvoir faire, c'est un don de Dieu, dont il faut par conséquent user avec action de grâces. Qu'en cela enfin et en toutes autres choses, il ne faut point oublier que nous serons tous cités au jugement de Dieu. C'est ce que l'Ecclesiaste inculque de temps en temps et à quoi rendent toutes ses maximes.—Paraphrase de l'Ecclesiaste avec des remarques. Paris, 1729, Préface, p. 12.

² Eadem, nempe, sapientia quæ, à vitæ humanæ seria contemplatione, quid vitandum, quid faciendum sit colligit; eadem, inquam, sapientia omnibus pensatis, rerum quarumvis hujus vitæ inanitatem, ore Salomonis, prædicat.—Veteris Testamenti libri Hagiographi, &c. Amstelædami, 1731, p. 677.

vii. A good name, excessive joy, injustice, patience, the guise of evil speakers, the corruption of men and especially of women.

viii. On reverence towards superiors, and Divine Providence.

ix. The innocent and the wicked are subjected to the same fate on earth; death evaded by neither, whereby all hope is extinguished; events not in the power of men; the praise of wisdom.

x. The inconvenience of folly in all; in those who govern, in works, in vain attempts, in sovereignties.

xi. Liberality in almsgiving, and the use of life.

xii. Remembrance of God in youth, the advancing disadvantages of old age figuratively described, and death; all things empty except the fear of God, who brings all to judgment.

1732.—Bauer, in his elaborate commentary,¹ assures us that Coheleth has hitherto been entirely mistaken by those who pretended to elucidate it; that *it contains Solomon's last and solemn address, which he wrote down and delivered to the congregation of Israel after the flight of Jeroboam into Egypt, as is evident from 1 Kings xi. 41,² that its purport is to exhibit the doings of men here upon earth, and the infirmities and sins mixed up therewith, and to shew how they may improve their works under the sun, and that it therefore treats upon the summum hominis officium, GOOD WORKS, and not upon the summum bonum, GOOD DAYS.*³ To this end Solomon, after the introduction

¹ Erläuterter Grund-Text vom Prediger Salomo. M. Christian Friedrich Bauer. Leipzig, 1732.

² This proof he derives from his translation of the passage, which is—Und weiter die Rede Salomonis, und alles, was er gethan hat, und seine Weisheit, sind nicht diese geschrieben im Buche die Rede Salomonis.—*Ibid.*, p. 3.

³ Sie handelt von Eitelkeiten, das ist von eitlen und üblen Verrichtungen der Menschen, wobey er der Eitelkeit immer entgegen stellet, was gut, oder was besser wäre, und die Menschen thun sollten unter dem Himmel, die Zeit ihrer Lebens-Tage über. Es ist dannenhero ein grosser Fehler, daß die Ausleger vom Prediger Salomo nicht sorgfältig genug haben attendiren und bemerken wollen, daß Salomo durch das Wort Eitelkeit verstehe das vereitelte Welt-Leben und die menschlichen Fehler und Schwachheiten, nebst denen dahin gehörigen Vorurtheilen; und daß er denen Eitelkeiten entgegen stelle *וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל* ein solches Gut, das sie thun sollen. Man hat nicht eingesehen, daß Salomo der Eitelkeit entgegen stelle cap. ii. 3, summum hominum officium, so etwas gutes, das die Menschen-Kinder thun und vor ihre vornehmste und beste That halten sollten, als bey deren Übung und Verrichtung es dem Menschen wohl und glücklich gehen würde. Weil nun, nach der heydnischen Philosophie, summum bonum *וְעַתָּה*

(i. 1–11), enumerates first his own doings, stating their faults and how he corrected them (i. 12–iii. 15); he then proceeds to the various doings of others, shewing also their faults, and how they ought to be corrected (iii. 16–xii. 8), and concludes by addressing himself to his son Rehoboam (xii. 9, &c.)

1734. — However, to the great annoyance of Bauer, which he had not even the power to conceal, all his protests against the wrong interpretations of others, and all his confident assertions about the correctness of his views, were of no use. Peter Hanssen, in spite of all, published a commentary shortly after, in opposition to Bauer, in which he gives the following analysis of the design of the book. 1. King Solomon made the basis of his contemplation the intrinsic value of human life, which he calls יִתְרוֹן. 2. But he does not find it in human life as enjoyed in this world. 3. Hence he teaches that life in this world, when looked upon apart from eternity, has no value whatever, that it derives it entirely from the future (chap. iii. 11).¹ 4. To this end he puts הֶבֶל, or *vanity*,² everything which does

summum hominis officium lange nicht so nahe mit einander verwandt sind, als nach des Salomonis seiner weisen Einsicht, so ist man daher auf die Meynung gerathen, wenn Salomo von Eitelkeiten rede, so verstehe er dadurch Unglücksfälle und Katastrophen, durch welche man unglücklich würde, und das gute, so er den Eitelkeiten entgegen stelle, sey nicht summum hominis officium, sondern summum bonum, nicht was gut und löblich ist, daß man es thue, sondern was in diesem Leben nur zu genießen gut wäre. Kurz, Salomo handele nicht von guten Werken, sondern nur von guten Tagen, und denenselben stelle er Unglücksfälle und böse Tage als Eitelkeiten entgegen. Da doch Salomo in diesem ganzen Prediger handelt von dem Thun der Menschen hier auf Erden, was bey solchem Thun sich vor Eitelkeiten finden, und was dagegen gut und besser wäre vor den Menschen und er thun sollte unter der Sonnen, cap. i. 3. Wie denn wohl zu merken, daß das Wort eitel, ingleichen Eitelkeit nach der Hebräischen Mund-Art von ganz besonderer Bedeutung ist, und sich bloß dem eissen Leben und Wandel der Menschen beylegen lässet. — Erläuterter Grund-Text vom Prediger Salomo. M. Christian Friedrich Bauer. Leipzig, 1732, pp. 5, 6.

¹ Betrachtungen über den Prediger Salomo, &c., von Peter Hanssen. Lübeck, 1734. Zweite Auflage, 1744.

² 1. Der König hat den innerlichen Werth des menschlichen Lebens, welchen er Jithron nennet, zum Grund seiner Betrachtung gelegt. 2. Er findet ihn aber nicht in dem menschlichen Leben, wie es in dieser Welt genossen wird. 3. Daher lehret er, daß das Leben in dieser Welt, wenn man es ausser der Ewigkeit

not further our real happiness, in contrast with יִתְרוֹן, and submits that, if there is no other life, all the inward and outward aspirations belong to the dominion of vanity. And whilst he demonstrates this by various arguments, he also teaches, 5. That although human life, apart from eternity, has no יִתְרוֹן, it nevertheless has a טוב, or a certain kind of good; 6. This good man must seek to enjoy, but in such a way as not to interfere with the acquisition of the יִתְרוֹן. 7. His first and last argument must be employed in behalf of the eternity in question, and the judgment through which we enter therein, and immediately obtain the יִתְרוֹן. 8. And indeed man must prepare for it from his youth, that he may not miss this peculiar end of the present life. This constitutes the main import, which Solomon has interspersed with diverse salutary lessons, which are specially useful to rulers, and which he appears to have written chiefly for the use and admonition of his son and heir-apparent.

1748. — "The learned Dr. Gill" adopts the Rabbinical view, that *Solomon wrote this book in his old age, after his fall and recovery out of it, and when he was brought to true repentance for*

ansiehst, gar keinen Werth habe, sondern denselben allein aus dem Zukünftigen herleiten müsse, E. 3, 11. 4. Er setzt zu dem Ende dem Jithron das Hefel oder Eitele, so nichts zu unserer wahren Vollkommenheit beyträgt, entgegen, und behauptet, daß, wenn kein ander Leben nach diesem wäre, alle innerliche und äußerliche Empfindungen in dieses Reich der Eitelkeit gehören. Wie er nun dieses mit verschiedenen Gründen beweißt, so lehret er 5. Obgleich das menschliche Leben von der Ewigkeit abgesondert, kein Jithron hat, so komme ihm doch ein Toß oder eine gewisse Güte zu. 6. Diese Güte muß der Mensch zu genießen suchen. Doch so, daß es an Erlangung des Jithron nicht hinderlich sey. 7. Sein erstes und letztes Augenmerk muß immer auf die bevorstehende Ewigkeit, und auf das Gericht, dadurch wir in selbige eingehen, und folglich das Jithron erlangen, gerichtet seyn. 8. Und zwar muß der Mensch sich von Jugend auf dazu anschicken, damit er dieses eigentlichen Endzwecks des gegenwärtigen Lebens nicht verfehlen möge. Wie nun dieses den Haupt-Inhalt ausmacht, so streuet Salomo allerley heilsame Lehren mit ein, die insonderheit den Regenten nützlich sind, und welche er vornehmlich seinem Sohn und Cron-Erben zum Nutzen und zur Erinnerung scheint geschrieben zu haben. This quotation is made from Rabe's translation of Mendelssohn's commentary on Ecclesiastes, where the learned translator has reprinted Bauer's, Hanssen's, Desvoeux', and J. D. Michaelis' versions in four parallel columns, and has also given an analysis of their respective views of Coheleth.

it; and that the general scope and design of it is to expose the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, to shew that a man's happiness does not lie in natural wisdom and knowledge, nor in worldly wealth, nor in civil honour, power, and authority, nor in the mere externals of religion; but in the fear of God and the worship of Him. It encourages men to a free use of the good things of life in a moderate way, with thankfulness to God; to submit with cheerfulness to adverse dispensations of Providence; to fear and honour the king, to be dutiful to civil magistrates, and kind to the poor; to expect a future state and an awful judgment; with many other useful things.

It must not be supposed, however, that Gill deduces this design from logically tracing the proper position which each verse occupies with regard to the whole argument, and a rational explanation of the text. His commentary chiefly consists of heterogeneous spiritual explanations, and a medley of Rabbinical quotations, which he frequently misunderstood. The following specimens of his mode of interpretation and mistranslations of the Rabbins will shew the correctness of these remarks:—

Chap. vii. 28. *One man among a thousand have I found.*—It is a great rarity to find a good man, truly wise and gracious; there are many that walk in the broad way, and but few that find the strait gate and narrow way, and are saved; they are but as one to a thousand (see Jer. v. 1; Matt. vii. 13, 14). Or rather, by this one of a thousand is meant the Messiah, the Wisdom of God he sought for (verse 25), and now says he found; to whom he looked for peace, pardon, and atonement, under a sense of his sins; who is the messenger, an interpreter, one among a thousand; yea, who is the chiefest among ten thousands (Job xxxiii. 23; Cant. v. 10), who is superior to angels and men, in the dignity of his person; in the perfection, purity, and holiness of his nature; in the excellency of his names; in his offices and relations; and in his concern in the affairs of grace and salvation; and who is to be found by every truly wise and gracious soul that seeks him early and earnestly, in the word and ordinances, under the illumination and direction of the blessed Spirit. If it is to be understood of a mere man, I should think the sense was this: of all the men that have been ensnared and taken by an adulterous woman, but one of a thousand have I observed,—and perhaps Solomon has respect to himself,—that was ever recovered out of her hands. *But a woman among all those have I not found:* that is, among all the harlots and adulterous women I

ever knew or heard of, I never knew nor heard of one that was ever reclaimed from her evil ways, and reformed or became a chaste and virtuous woman; he may have respect to the thousand women that were either his wives and concubines, and, among all these, he found not one that deserved the above character; for this is not to be understood of women in general, for Solomon must have known that there have been good women in all ages, and perhaps more than men; and that there were many in his days, though those with whom his more intimate acquaintance was were not such, which was his unhappiness; and his criminal conversation with them is what he lamented and repented of. It may be interpreted thus, *One man, the Messiah, among all the sons of men have I found free from original sin; but one woman among all the daughters of Eve I have not found clear of it.*

How revolting to our feelings, to say nothing of the gross violation of the laws of language, to make the one man be either "*a penitent that has been ensnared and taken by an adulterous woman,*" or "*the Messiah, among all the sons of men, free from original sin.*" We shall now give a few instances of his mistranslation of the Rabbins.

Chap. v. 8. *And there be higher than they.*—Gill here remarks, "Aben Ezra interprets it of the secret of the name of God, which he says is inexplicable." The following are Ibn Ezra's words:—*דע כי יש שומר שרואה זה החסם: ואינו אחד רק הם רבים וכל אחד נבזה מעל נבזה ושומרים רבים לא ידע איש מספרם כי הם נבזים על אלה שמעלם אינו שיה חידוע סוד השם ידע כי נבזה מעל נבזה הם חסמים וחמשה ולא only, but there are many, and every one of them is higher than the other; there are so many watches, that no man can know their number, for they rise higher than those whose degrees differ or vary; and he who is acquainted with the mystery of the sacred name, i. e., with divinity, knows that the words "higher than the high" refer to the fifty-five angels, and I cannot explain it.*

V. 20. *For he shall not much remember the days of his life,* &c.—"Be they more or fewer as Jarchi," adds Gill. Now Jarchi, as he is erroneously called, says nothing of the sort; his words are *אין ארך ימים בעולם כי לא הרבה שנים ארך ימי חייו כי מעט הם ולא הרב ולמה יסרה לאסוף הן יסרה בדבר העוסק לו לעולם, הבא בחייו; "for not many," for life here is not long; OR LITERALLY, for there is no length of this in this world. "He shall remember the days of his life," for they are few, and not many; and why shall he toil to gather wealth? let him rather labour in his life for that which will stand by him in the world to come.*

Gill's remark is evidently owing to his mistaking *מעט ולא הרבה* for *be they more or fewer*.

Upon the same verse Gill says, —

"Some, as Aben Ezra observes, and which he approves of, and is agreeably to the accents, render the words *if he has not much, he remembers the days of his life*, if he has but little of the good things of this life, he remembers how few his days are he has to live." Ibn Ezra's words are כי לא יש מפרש אם לא יעמוד לו השבוע הרבה יזכור את ימי חייו שהענין בהם ויש לו בנפשו שמחח לבב והנכון בעיני שהוא כן יזכור כי לא הרבה ימי חייו ואם נוסף כמו ונא הארץ ואם הדוב "If not." Some interpret it, *if happiness does not remain long with one, he should remember the days of his life wherein he enjoyed himself, and he will have joy of heart in the remembrance thereof.* I, however, think that the proper meaning is this, *Let him remember that the days of his life are not many, and that man is redundant, as in "And there came a lion and (איש) a bear" (1 Sam. xvii. 34).*

This misrepresentation of Ibn Ezra is all the more serious, since it deprives this learned Rabbi of the honour of being the first who gave the right construction of the text, and makes him talk nonsense. These few specimens must suffice here.

Other errors quite as flagrant, or even more so, will be found dispersed throughout the commentary, and are noticed in their proper places. We have felt it a disagreeable duty to expose these blunders, because Gill is regarded, along with Lightfoot, as the oracle upon Rabbinical literature; and because many a divine, who prefers devoting his time to the acquisition of some profane language, rather than to the study of the original of the Old Testament, from which he professes to teach the will of God, looks up to Dr. Gill as his guide in Jewish matters.

1749. — The learned and eccentric William Whiston tells us¹ that he wrote "*a very small dissertation on the book of Ecclesiastes, to shew that it is a collection of Solomon's reflections about points of the greatest consequence; the most of them when he was a religious man, in his first and last days; but several of them when he was irreligious and sceptical, during his amours and idolatry. This book is not printed.*"

1751. — Grotius' criticisms on Ecclesiastes began at last to produce their effect upon the Continent. We now find the

¹ Memoirs of the Life and Writings of William Whiston. London, 1749, p. 347.

learned John David Michaelis, so well known as the editor of and annotator on Lowth's Prælections on Hebrew Poetry, boldly maintaining that a prophet who lived after the Babylonish captivity wrote this book in the name of Solomon, in order that he might be able, in the person of so happy and wise a king, to philosophise all the more touchingly about the vanity of human happiness; and that the *design of Coheleth is to shew, in the first place, the great imperfections of the happiness of a man who is left to himself, and is separated from God* (chap. i. 1 – iv. 16), and, secondly, to point out the means to a true and lasting enjoyment of this life (chap. iv. 17 – xii. 14).

i. Solomon substantiates his main proposition (chap. i. 2), by shewing the transitoriness of pleasure sought in knowledge (3–14), the grief we experience at the discovery of imperfections which we cannot rectify (15–18), the insufficiency and fleetness of sensual pleasures (ii. 1–11), and our inability, with all our wisdom, to avoid meeting with the same fate as the brute (12–26), because of the unavoidable destinies which issue from the fixed course of the world (iii. 1–15), and from unavoidable misfortunes (iii. 16–iv. 3), and because man uses his work, which ought to be a pastime, as a means to obtain fame and riches, and engages therein chiefly out of envy and jealousy (iv. 4–16).

ii. Whereupon he gives the directions for happiness: to be religious (iv. 17–v. 6), not to be too uneasy through the evils which befall others (7, 8), to abstain from too great a love for money (9–12), to be cheerful and patient at the wickedness which the wisdom of God permits to take place, remembering our own sinfulness (vii.), to endure the injustice of government without rebellion (viii. – ix. 10), to use labour as a means for maintaining contentment, since it is mostly rewarded, as is evident from the example of a wise and foolish mode of government (11–18), continuing to encourage us to work (xi. 1–6),

¹ Poetischer Entwurf der Gedanken des Prediger-Buchs Salomons. Göttingen, 1751. Zweite Auflage, 1762.

with this restriction, however, that we are to enjoy the lawful pleasures of life (7, 8), yet not to forget the changeableness of all earthly things, or the fear of God (xi. 9–xii. 7); then follows the conclusion (8–14).

1753. — In England, too, the writings of Grotius aided the progress of liberal criticism, as may be seen from the almost unparalleled remarks of Bishop Lowth on Ecclesiastes. The learned prelate says¹—

There is another didactic work of Solomon, entitled *Kohélet* (Ecclesiastes), or the Preacher; or rather, perhaps, Wisdom, the Preacher; the general tenor and style of which is very different from the book of Proverbs, though there are many detached sentiments and proverbs interspersed; for the whole work is uniform, and confined to one subject, namely, the vanity of the world exemplified by the experience of Solomon, who is introduced in the character of a person investigating a very difficult question—examining the arguments on either side, and at length disengaging himself from an anxious and doubtful disputation. It would be very difficult to distinguish the parts and arrangement of this production; the order of the subject and the connection of the arguments are involved in so much obscurity, that scarcely any two commentators have agreed concerning the plan of the work, and the accurate division of it into parts or sections. The truth is, the laws of methodical composition and arrangement were neither known by the Hebrews nor regarded in their didactic writings. They uniformly retained the old sententious manner; nor did they submit to method, even where the occasion appeared to demand it. The style of this work is, however, singular; the language is generally low, I might almost call it mean or vulgar; it is frequently loose, unconnected, approaching to the incorrectness of conversation; and possesses very little of the poetical character, even in the composition and structure of the periods—which peculiarity may possibly be accounted for from the nature of the subject.

Thus this refined scholar and acute critic believed that Solomon was simply *introduced* or *personated* in this treatise, and that *the language is low*, of course too low for the golden age of Solomonic Hebrew, though the wary prelate chose not to express it so.

1760. — As if to corroborate at once the remark of the foregoing

¹ Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews. Lecture xxiv., Gregory's translation, third edition. London, 1835, pp. 270, 271.

writer, "that scarcely any two commentators have agreed concerning the plan of the book," the first exposition which appeared after the publication of that statement is a protest against all its predecessors. Thus Desvieux maintains that *the author's design is to prove the immortality of the soul, or rather the necessity of another state after this life, from such arguments as may be afforded by reason and experience*,¹ and that it is upon this principle alone that this book can be understood and explained. He says—

The whole discourse may be reduced to three propositions, every one of which, when properly reflected upon, yields a strong proof of a future state of rewards and punishments. But it must be observed that, though in all reasonings two propositions must be apprehended by the mind in order to form any conclusion, yet it is not always necessary both should be expressed. When the second is so obvious, that it does in a manner obtrude itself upon the mind, as soon as the first is mentioned, or so certainly true that no man in his right senses can well question it, then a philosopher may, according to the strictest rules, and an orator generally does, leave it to be understood and supplied by the attentive reader or hearer; and this is what the logicians call an enthymeme. Now I hope this proposition, *human affairs are under the inspection and government of a wise, powerful, and infinitely perfect Being, who can never be supposed to act but agreeably to his attributes*, shall be easily granted to be one of those, which may be left unexpressed in a religious argument. Then let it be considered as the *minor* or second proposition of a syllogism, whereof any of the three we are going to mention is the *major* or first proposition; and I am much mistaken if the doctrine I look upon as being chiefly taught in this book, does not appear to be the regular consequence of such a syllogism. These three propositions, every one of which is attended with its proper apparatus of proofs and special observations, are the following:—

I. No labour or trouble of men in this world can ever be so profitable as to produce in them a lasting contentment, and thorough satisfaction of mind.

II. Earthly goods, and whatever we can acquire by our utmost trouble and labour in this world, are so far from making us lastingly happy, that they may be even looked on as real obstacles to our ease, quiet, and tranquillity.

¹ A Philosophical and Critical Essay on Ecclesiastes; wherein the author's design is stated; his doctrine vindicated; his method explained in an analytical paraphrase, annexed to a new version of the text from the Hebrew, &c., by A. V. Desvieux. London, 1760, p. 79.

III. Men know not what is or is not truly advantageous to them, because they are either ignorant, or unmindful, of that which must come to pass after they are dead.

Therefore any one may conclude that there must be a state of true and solid happiness for men out of this world.

PROPOSITION I.—Chap. i. 2, 3.

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| Chap. | Ver. | |
| | 4-11. | First proof.—The course of nature. |
| | 12, &c. | Second proof.—Men's occupations. |
| | 16-18. | First Head.—Wisdom or philosophy. |
| ii. | 1, 2. | Second Head.—Pleasure. |
| | 3-10. | Both jointly. |
| | 11. | General conclusion of the second proof. |
| | | A review of the second proof, with special conclusions relating to every particular therein mentioned, viz., |
| | 12-17. | i. Wisdom. |
| | 18-23. | ii. Riches. |
| | 24-26. | iii. Pleasure. |
| iii. | 1, &c. | Third proof.—Inconstancy of men's will. |
| | 9. | Conclusion of the third proof. |
| | | A review of the second and third proofs considered jointly, with special observations and corollaries. |
| | 10, 11. | First observation.—God is inculpable. |
| | 12-15. | Second observation.—God is the Author of whatever befalls us in this world. |
| | 16, 17. | First corollary.—God shall redress all grievances. |
| | 18, 21. | Second corollary.—God must be exalted, and man humbled. |
| | 22. | Third corollary.—God alloweth men to enjoy the present. |
| iv. | 1. | Fourth proof.—Men's neglect of proper opportunities, evidenced in several instances, viz., |
| | 1-3. | i. Oppression. |
| | 4. | ii. Envy. |
| | 5, 6. | iii. Idleness. |
| | 7-12. | iv. Avarice. |
| v. | 13-9. | v. Misapplication of esteem and regard. |
| | | N. B.—V. 1-9 is a digression, containing several admonitions, in order to prevent any misconstruction of the foregoing remarks. |
| | 10-12. | vi. Expensive living. |

PROPOSITION II.—Chap. v. 13.

- v. 14-17. First proof.—Instability of riches.

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| Chap. | Ver. | |
| vi. | 18-2. | Second proof.—Insufficiency of riches to make one happy. |
| | 3-6. | Corollary.—The fate of an <i>abortive</i> is preferable, upon the whole, to that of one who lives without enjoying life. |
| | 7-9. | Third proof.—Men's insatiableness. |
| | 10, 11. | General conclusion from the <i>first</i> and <i>second</i> propositions. |

PROPOSITION III.—Chap. vi. 12.

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| vii. | 1, &c. | First proof.—Wrong estimation of things. |
| | | A <i>digression</i> intended, like that v. 1-9, to prevent any misconstruction of the foregoing observations, and containing several <i>advice</i> s, together with a strong commendation of him who gives them, in order to enforce the observation of the <i>rules</i> laid down by him. |
| | 9-12. | First advice.—Not to blame Providence. |
| | 13. | Second advice.—Not to judge of Providence. |
| | 14, 15. | Third advice.—To submit to Providence. |
| | 16-20. | Fourth advice.—To avoid excess. |
| | 21, 22. | Fifth advice.—Not to mind idle reports. |
| | 23-25. | Commendation of the foregoing advices, from the author's application to examine everything; and, especially, |
| | 26-29. | i. Wickedness and ignorance. |
| viii. | 1-8. | ii. Wisdom. |
| | | Second proof.—Anticipated judgments. |
| | 9-14. | i. That sin shall go unpunished, because it is so in this world. |
| ix. | 15-6. | ii. That life is preferable to death. |
| | 7-9. | First corollary.—Earthly enjoyments are not criminal. |
| | 10. | Second corollary.—A proper use must be made of our faculties. |
| | 11-15. | Third proof.—Judgments that are seemingly right, yet truly false. |
| | 16, &c. | Fourth proof.—Little regard paid to wisdom. |
| | 16. | i. Past services are forgotten. |
| x. | 17-4. | ii. The least fault is taken notice of. |
| | 5-19. | iii. Favour gets what is due to merit. |
| | 20. | A caution, to prevent the abuse of the foregoing remarks. |

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

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| xi. | 1-4. | i. From the <i>first</i> PROPOSITION. We must give unto earthly goods that stability which they are capable of. |
| | 5, 6. | ii. From the <i>first</i> and <i>second</i> PROPOSITIONS. We must, in our conduct, conform to the design of Providence upon us, and leave the success to God. |

Chap. Ver.

XII. 7, 8. III. From the *three* PROPOSITIONS, but especially from the *third*. We must seek for happiness beyond the grave.

9-12. Commendation of the work, from several considerations.

13, 14. CONCLUSION of the whole.

Desvieux's commentary is one of the most curious and elaborate productions on Ecclesiastes; it contains much valuable criticism, but the author is too rash in his emendations of the text, and too fond of forcing upon the sacred writer the most far-fetched interpretation, in order to establish his preconceived notions. The philological notes are distributed under different heads, without any regard to the order of chapters and verses; hence it is very difficult to find the comments upon the respective verses in this ill-arranged mass of singular learning.

1768.—A similar fate to that which induced Prior to write his poem on the vanity of the world, gave rise to another poetical paraphrase of Coheleth, which was published anonymously in 1768.¹ "The author (a Turkey merchant)," whose name is said to be Mr. Brodick, "was at Lisbon during the great earthquake, just then sitting in his night-gown and slippers. Before he could dress himself, part of the house he was in fell, and blocked him up. By this means his life was saved, for all who had run out were dashed to pieces by the falling houses."² He saw all his property swallowed up. Some time after his arrival in England, he lost his eyesight, when her Majesty was pleased to make him pensioner in the Charter House, where he died, January, 1795.

Brodick entirely espouses the traditional view that Solomon wrote this book in his old age, after having openly violated the laws of God. "The only atonement he could now make was to point out the rock on which he had split, to the end that future

¹ Coheleth, or the Royal Preacher, a Poetical Paraphrase of the Book of Ecclesiastes. Most humbly inscribed to the King. Printed for J. Wallis, at Yorick's Head, Ludgate Street, 1768. Reprinted, with supplementary notes, by Nathaniel Higgins, at Whitchurch, Salop, 1824. This is the edition to which we refer.

² Wesley's Journals, Monday, Feb. 8, 1708, as quoted by Dr. Adam Clarke in his introduction to Ecclesiastes.

princes might take warning by his example. He therefore thought it a duty incumbent on him to make his repentance as public as his crimes, and to leave an eternal monument to posterity that the wisest of men, when left to their own conduct, are liable to the greatest failings; that a contempt of religion, especially when princes set the example, always introduces a general corruption of manners, and that those in the most exalted stations, no less than those in the meanest, have occasion enough to be reminded of their duty—in a word, that the welfare or ruin of a nation depends, in great measure, on the virtuous or vicious deportment of those who hold the reins of government."¹ The subject of the book is *the chief or sovereign good, which man, as a rational and accountable being, should here propose to himself*. Brodick also, both in the division of the book and in accounting for the difficult passages, follows his predecessors. "Solomon," says he, "shews in the first place what is *not* happiness, and then what it really is. He frequently speaks, not according to his own sentiments, though he proposes the thing in a naked and simple manner, designedly making use of such terms as might set the picture in a fuller and clearer light. . . . We must therefore take particular care to distinguish the doubts and objections of others from Solomon's answers."

That Wesley should have seen such great originality in this production as to lead him to say that "the author of it understands both the difficult expressions and the connection of the whole better than any other either ancient or modern writer whom I have seen," and that Adam Clarke should have "*cordially subscribed* to Mr. Wesley's opinion," we must ascribe to the peculiar warm-heartedness of our Wesleyan brethren, which often manifests itself in hyperboles.

1770.—As the unfortunate Dr. Dodd, in his valuable commentary upon the Bible, adopts Desvieux's view, we must refer to page 179, where we have given an analysis of it.

¹ Introduction, p. xii.

1777.—Kleuker¹ maintains that the design of this book is neither *to teach the fear of God*,² as some affirm, nor *to set forth the vanity of all earthly things*,³ as others will have it, but *to shew that the object, value, and cardinal duty of life are, that man should quietly pursue his course, do good as his hand finds it, and, instead of embittering his days under the sun, cheerfully eat and drink, and be contented with his labours during his transitory life, for this is his portion for all the trouble and toil which he has.*⁴

1778.—The interruption theory advanced by Dean Yeard found at last an eminent defender in the person of Herder. This refined poet and scholar says⁵—

There are two voices to be distinguished in this book; the one is of a subtle inquirer who searches after truth, and, in the tone of I, mostly concludes with, "All is vanity;" whilst the other, in the tone of Thou, frequently interrupts him, upbraids him with the temerity of his inquiry, and mostly concludes with, What will be the ultimate result of the whole life? There are indeed no proper questions and answers, doubts and solutions; but still a something proceeds out of one and the same mouth which resembles both, and is to be distinguished by interruptions and continuations. Hence the book may be divided into two columns,

¹ Salomonische Schriften: Erster Theil, welcher den Prediger enthält. Leipzig, 1777.

² Das „Fürchte Gott“ ist nicht Hauptzweck des Buches, sondern bloß eine Schlusssumme und gleichsam ein Orakelspruch für die Praxis des Herzens, p. 9.

³ Es ist nicht Endabsicht der Rede, dieses (die Eitelkeit alles Irdischen) und weiter Nichts zu lehren, sondern diese Empfindung ist nur Grundannahme zu höherem Ziel, chap. i. 2.

⁴ Der Zweck, Werth und Cardinalspflicht des Lebens besteht darin, daß der Mensch ruhig seinen Gang fortgeht, das Gute thut, wie seine Hand es findet, und statt sich seine Tage unter der Sonne zu verbittern, mit Freude isst und trinkt und seiner Arbeit froh wird, in den Tagen seiner Vergänglichkeit, denn das ist sein Theil für alle Müß' und Arbeit, die er hat, p. 22. Erster's Commentar über den Prediger, p. 24.

⁵ Es sind zwei Stimmen zu unterscheiden, die eine eines Grüblers, der Wahrheit sucht und in dem Ton seines Ichs meistens damit „daß Alles eitel sei“ endet, während eine andere Stimme, im Tone des Du, ihn oft unterbricht, ihm das Verwegen seiner Untersuchungen vorhält, und meistens damit endet: was zuletzt das Resultat des ganzen Lebens bleibe? Es ist nicht völlig Frage und Antwort, Zweifel und Auflösung, aber doch aus einem und demselben Munde Etwas, das beiden gleicht und sich durch Abbrüche und Fortsetzungen unterscheidet. Man kann das Buch also gleichsam in zwei Kolonnen theilen, davon die eine dem ermatteten Sucher, die zweite dem warnenden Lehrer gehört.

the one belonging to the exhausted enquirer, and the other to the warning teacher—

| THE ENQUIRER. | THE TEACHER. | THE ENQUIRER. | THE TEACHER. |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| i. 1-11. | | vii. 1. | vii. 2-15. |
| i. 12-18. | | vii. 16. | vii. 17-23. |
| ii. 1-11. | | vii. 24-29. | |
| ii. 12-26. | | viii. 1. | viii. 2-13. |
| iii. 1-15. | | viii. 14-17. | |
| iii. 16-22. | | ix. 1-3. | ix. 4-10. |
| iv. 1-16. | | ix. 11-18. | |
| | iv. 17. | x. 1-3. | x. 4. |
| | v. 1-8. | x. 5-7. | x. 8-19. |
| v. 9-19. | | | x. 20. |
| vi. 1-11. | | | xi. 1-12. |

As to the import of the book, Herder remarks,¹ *I know no book of antiquity which describes the sum of human life, the vicissitudes and vanities in its occupations, projects, speculations, and pleasures, as well as that which is alone real, lasting, progressive, changeable, profitable therein, more fully, more impressively, and more concisely than Coheleth.*

1779.—It is rather remarkable that Eichhorn should have arrived at the same conclusion, independently of Herder. He regards this book as *a dialogue between a passionate inquirer and a calm teacher.*

There is evidently, says he,² an interchange of two different persons in the book. There is an observer or inquirer, who looks gloomily upon the life and destiny of man, and in his youthful warmth draws exaggerating conclusions from his observations, and seldom does justice to the good of

¹ Mir ist kein Buch aus dem Alterthume bekannt, welches die Summe des menschlichen Lebens, seine Abwechselungen und Nichtigkeiten in Geschäften, Entwürfen, Speculationen und Vergnügen, zugleich mit dem, was einzig in ihm wahr, dauernd, fortgehend, wechselnd, lohnend ist, reicher, eindringlicher, kürzer beschriebe, als dieses. — Briefe über das theologische Studium; Erster's Commentar, pp. 18, 19.

² Es wechseln ganz offenbar zweierlei Personen in dem Buche ab, ein Betrachter, Beobachter, Forscher, der mit finsternen Blicken Leben und Schicksal der Menschen umfaßt und in jugendlicher Hitze die Folgerungen aus seinen Bemerkungen überspannt und dem Guten dieser Erde selten Gerechtigkeit widerfahren läßt. Ihm zur Seite steht ein alter Weiser, der das Feuer des raschen

this earth. By his side stands an aged sage, who assuages the fire of the hasty youth, leads him back to the path of truth which he has overstepped in the warmth of his temper, and shews him that evil has a good side. The former always concludes with the complaint that all is vanity, and the latter, with the inference which a sage will deduce from the course of the world.

THE ENQUIRER.

Chap. i. — iv. 16.

v. 12 — vi. 12.

vii. 15.

viii. 23 — 29.

ix. 9 — ix. 6.

ix. 11 — 18.

x. 5 — 7.

THE TEACHER.

Chap. iv. 17 — v. 11.

vii. 1 — 14.

vii. 16 — 22.

viii. 1 — 8.

ix. 7 — 10.

x. 1 — 4.

x. 8 — xii. 7.

The conclusion of the book xii. 8 — 14.

1779. — Jacobi maintains that this book is intended to be *exclusively a guide for courtiers*; a fact which, he greatly deplores, has hitherto been overlooked. He says¹—

The chief object of the writer is not to depict the life of men generally, although some features of it are alluded to, but to describe the life of those courtiers who do not find it their vocation to be idle and lazy, but to think, think profoundly, labour zealously, wearisomely, and anxiously, and deprive themselves of their best pleasures, and rarely obtain the object of their desire. The life of such persons, being that which he had experienced himself, he depicts with a master-hand, and gives the wisest and most wholesome lessons how such persons, who make their own life wearisome, may obtain peace of mind, and greatly enjoy the pleasures of life, which the benign Creator and Ruler of the world has bestowed upon them.

Jünglings mäſſigt, ihn auf den Pfad der Wahrheit, über den er in der Hitze weggeſchoſſen war, zurückführt und zeigt, wie auch das Böſe ſeine gute Seite habe. Jener endigt immer mit der Klage, das Alles eitel ſei und dieſer mit den Folgerungen, die ein Weiſer aus dem Lauf der Welt ziehen wird. — Einleitung in das Alte Teſtament, iii., p. 618, &c.; Eſſer's Commentar, pp. 19, 20.

¹ Die Haupt-Abſicht des Verfaſſers dieſer Schrift iſt nicht das allgemeine Leben der Menſchen zu beſchreiben, obgleich auch von ſelbigem ein und anderer Zug angebracht wird, ſondern er ſchildert das Leben derjenigen Poſteute, welche ihren Beruf nicht im Müßigange und Ländeln finden, ſondern denken, weit hinaus denken, eifrig, müßſam, ängſtlich wirken, ſich des mehreſten Vergnügens berauben, und den vorgeſetzten Zweck ihrer Wünſche ſelten erreichen. Das Leben ſolcher Perſonen, welches er an ſich und andern erfahren, ſchildert er mit

1784. — None of these views, however, could satisfy Döderlein,¹ who submits that the author, who probably lived about the time of the Babylonish captivity, started the notion that this book was a prælection or treatise delivered by Solomon to his literary academy,² as *Cohleth* signifies such an academy; and that the *theme and main import of it is given in chap. i. 2, 3, and is repeated again in xii. 8, as the result of all the observations and discourses, namely, the vanity of all earthly things, which men prize so highly and labour for so arduously.*

It shews³ the nothingness, or, as Luther puts it, the vanity, the perishableness, the instability, the defectiveness, the unsatisfactoriness found in the earthly things which man seeks, values, and toilsomely seizes; it proves that man does not find here below that which he strives after; that he cannot find it however much he may toil in the world, exert both mind and body, and spare neither trouble nor pain, because every earthly good is transitory, and the enjoyment of it is mingled with anxiety and uneasiness; that if earthly good, of whatever kind it be, is the end of man, and wearisome striving after it the means to obtain it, his trouble is thankless, useless, and profitless.

der Hand eines Meisters, und giebet die weisesten und heilsamsten Lehren, wie solche, sich selber das mühseligste Leben schaffende Personen zur Ruhe des Geistes gelangen und die Vergnügungen des Lebens genießen, weil besser genießen könnten, die ihnen der gütige Schöpfer und Regierer der Welt gönnet. — Das von seinen Vorwürfen gerettete Prediger-Buch des Salomos. Jena, 1770, pp. 10, 11.

¹ Salomons Prediger und hohes Lied neu überſetzt mit kurzen erläuternden Anmerkungen von D. Johann Chriſtoph Döderlein. Jena, 1784.

² Wie es ſcheint, ſo erdichtet der Verfaſſer des Buches, daß dieß eine Vorleſung, oder eine Abhandlung ſey, welche Salomo ſeiner gelehrten Akademie vorgelegt habe. Denn dieſe Akademie möchte ich unter dem Namen Cohleth, verſtehen, pp. xv., xvi.

³ Thema und Hauptinhalt des Buches wird hier (R. i. 2, 3) angezeigt und R. xii. 8 als Reſultat aller Betrachtungen und Diſcurſe wiederholt. Es iſt die Nichtigkeit oder, wie Luther ſetzt, die Eitelkeit, d. i. die Hinſtlichkeit, der Unbeſtand, das Mangelhafte, das Nichtbefriedigende, das in den irdiſchen Dingen, die der Menſch ſucht, ſchätzt, mit Mühe haſcht, angetroffen wird; es iſt der Beweis daß er hier das nicht finde, wornach er ſtrebt, nicht finden könne, ſo ſehr er ſich auf der Welt plagt, beſchäftigt, Geiſt und Körper anſtrengt, und weder Mühe noch Schmerz ſcheut, weil jedes Erdengut flüchtig, der Genuß von jedem mit Gram und Unruhe vermiſcht iſt; daß wenn Erdengut, von welcher Art es auch ſey, Endzweck, und müßſames Streben darnach Mittel iſt, ſeine Mühe undankbar, vergebens, und unbelohnt ſeye, pp. 1, 2.

Döderlein divides the book into five sections, with a prologue and epilogue. The following are his divisions : —

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------|------------------|--------------|
| Prologue ... chap. | i. 1-11 | Section iv. | vi. 9-x. 1 |
| Section i. chap. | i. 12-18 | v. | x. 2-xi. 6 |
| ii. | ii. 1-v. 8 | vi. | xi. 7-xii. 8 |
| iii. | v. 9-vi. 8 | Conclusion | xii. 8-14. |

1785. — Spohn, again, maintains that Coheleth is neither a continuous discourse nor a dialogue, but adopts the view of Grotius, that it is a *compilation of moral sentences*. He says '—

As to the order and disposition according to which the author of Ecclesiastes arranged his thoughts, I affirm that he who seeks in it a logical disposition will not find it, in spite of all art. It consists of moral maxims, which directly or indirectly promote true fear of God — maxims which call our attention to the wise government of God, to lead us thereby to repose firm confidence in God — maxims which draw our thoughts away from the world, and direct them to virtue. In this way we can be cheerful, and enjoy the pleasures which the Creator offers us on all sides, in the midst of our wearisome labours and the perishableness of all earthly things.

The chief value of this elaborate commentary consists in the copious collation which it gives of the various readings of the Greek versions. Spohn was, however, too fond of emendations, and frequently adopted other readings, simply because they differed from the received text.

1787. The confused commentary of Greenway, in England, forms a lamentable contrast to the last-mentioned scholarly production on the Continent. Greenway's eccentric commentary

¹ Was die Einrichtung und Anlage, nach welcher der Verfasser des Predigers seine Ideen geordnet habe, betrifft, so halte ich dafür, daß derjenige, der eine logikalische Disposition darinne sucht, bey aller Kunst, sie nicht finden wird. Es sind moralische Sätze, die näher oder entfernter wahre Gottes Verehrung befördern; Sätze, welche auf die weise Weltregierung Gottes aufmerksam machen, um dadurch zu einem festen Vertrauen gegen Gott geleitet zu werden; Sätze, die den Sinn von der Welt abziehen und auf Ewigkeit hinlenken. Auf dieser Weise können wir fröhlich seyn und Freuden, die der Schöpfer von allen Seiten darreicht, bey unsern Müheligkeiten, bey der Hinfälligkeit aller irdischen Dinge genießen. Der Prediger Salomo aus dem hebräischen aufs neue übersezt und mit kritischen Anmerkungen, von M. Gottlieb Leberecht Spohn. Leipzig, 1785. p. xxxvi.

consists of three parts, and was published at different times : the first part, containing chaps. ii., vii. 23-29, xi. 7-10, and xii. 1-13, was published in 1781 ; the second part, containing chaps. iii., iv., v., vi., and vii., has gone through three editions, none of which bears a date ; the third part, containing chaps. i., viii., ix., x., xi. 1-6, and xii. 14, with some desultory " reflections and notes " on different portions of Scripture, appeared in 1787. As to the design of the book, Greenway adopts the patristic opinion, that "*it is a discourse, and that the sum and substance of the observations and instructions delivered therein is, that the present world, and everything belonging to it, is mere vanity.*"

Some idea may be formed of the manner in which our author has acquitted himself in this " New Translation, with a Paraphrase," from the following remarks, which he subjoined to the first part : —

The translator considers the Hebrew text, as it appears in our printed Bibles, merely as a translation ; the original text being the letters without vowel points, without pauses, and even without any division into words. He therefore thinks himself at liberty, whenever the context requires it, either to read with different points, or to divide the letters differently into words or sentences. He supposes himself, too, at liberty to read some sorts of words either with or without a *Vau*, with or without a *Yod* ; for all readers have seen and allowed the necessity of doing this in many instances, and therefore it may be necessary in others, which they have not been aware of. He has, too, now and then taken the liberty of applying that common rule, *Litteræ homogeneæ, sive unius organi facile inter se permutantur*, where no application of it perhaps has been made before. And these are all the liberties he has presumed to take, except he has in a single instance supposed a word should be read with an *Aleph epentheticum*, as is done in the present way of reading the text in many places.¹

After this specimen, the reader will not be surprised to hear that this commentary is rarely to be met with complete.

1790. — A more scholarly performance than Greenway's, is the translation of Ecclesiastes which Dr. Hodgson, principal of

¹ Ecclesiastes, in three parts. A new Translation, with a Paraphrase. To which is added a new Translation of other passages of Scripture, with notes and reflections. Part i., p. 14.

Hereford College, Oxford, published in 1790.¹ It is to be regretted that the Doctor has studiously avoided any expression, in his critical notes, which might lead the reader to discover what his view was on the design of the book. The merits of his renderings and notes will be found discussed in the course of the commentary.

1793. — Biblical criticism had now made such progress on the Continent, that even the Roman Catholic Jahn found the sound laws of interpretation far more powerful than the teachings of the infallible Church. Hence, contrary to all tradition, he, like many Protestant commentators, affirmed that the language and import of Ecclesiastes preclude the Solomonic authorship,² and joined issue with Luther, in maintaining that the design of the book is *to teach men to repress their restless and eager efforts, which hurry them on in heaping up wealth, in securing pleasures, and acquiring honours; and, at the same time, to instruct them not to increase the troubles of life, by denying themselves the enjoyment of harmless, though uncertain and fleeting pleasures.*

1794. — Similar to this is the view of Pfannkuche,³ who says that *the design of the sacred writer is to recommend to the mind*

¹ Ecclesiastes; a new Translation from the original Hebrew, by Bernard Hodgson, LL.D., Principal of Hereford College, Oxford, 1790.

² Salomo spricht im ganzen Buche, da aber die Sprache und Schreibart dieses Weisen, wie sie in den Sprüchwörtern vorliegt, in unserm Buche nicht zu finden ist, sondern viele Chaldaismen und jüngere Worte vorkommen, so kann man schließen, daß es von Salomo nicht herrühre. Dieses wird noch dadurch bestätigt, daß Salomo schwerlich so bitter über Unterdrückung, Ungerechtigkeit bei Gerichtsstellen, Erhebung der Thoren zu hohen Bürden, &c., Klagen konnte, wenn er nicht eine Satyre auf sich selbst machen wollte; auch bei Lebzeiten konnte er wohl nicht schreiben, ich war König in Jerusalem, noch bin König in Jerusalem, da dieses Jeder wußte. Der Verfasser muß also in jüngerer Zeit gelebt haben, nur hat er seine Beobachtungen dem weisen Könige in den Munde gelegt. Einleitung in die göttliche Bücher des Alten Bundes, § 214.

³ Scriptorem totum in eo esse, ut animum de futuro securum, sorte quacunq̃ contentum lætitiæque patentem tamquam bonorum in hac rerum inconstantia et fragilitate extremum, malorumque, quibus vita undique septa sit, lenimen præsentissimum prædicet atque commendet. — Exercitatt. in Ecclesiasten. Gotting., 1794, pp. 7, 8.

contentment with its lot, without anxiety for the future; and to be open to pleasure, as if it were the extreme of happiness, in the midst of the prevailing inconstancy and frailty of things; shewing the most efficacious means of mitigating the evils whereby life is surrounded on every side.

1794. — Simultaneous with Pfannkuche's commentary, appeared the small but elaborate work of John Ernest Christian Schmidt on Coheleth, wherein the learned author maintains, that *the design of this book is to prescribe laws to all human exertions, no matter what the object for which they are made, in order to keep them within proper limits, so that it may be regarded as the most beautiful commentary on the figure of the Greek Nemesis; that Solomon was not its author; that it consists of twelve essays, written under different states of mind, and at different periods, and was not finished for publication; but is simply a sketch of a work which the author intended to work out at some future period.* The following are the twelve essays:—

| Essay | i. chap. | i. and ii. | Essay | vii. chap. | vi. 7-vii. 10. |
|-------|----------|--------------|-------|------------|------------------|
| ii. | | iii. | viii. | | vii. 11-29. |
| iii. | | iv. 1-16. | ix. | | viii. 1-13. |
| iv. | | iv. 17-v. 6. | x. | | viii. 14-ix. 10. |
| v. | | v. 7-19. | xi. | | ix. 11-x. 20. |
| vi. | | vi. 1-6. | xii. | | xi. 1-xii. 7. |

Epilogue, by a later hand, chap. xii. 8-14.¹

1795. — Gaab thinks that *the design of this book is to teach us how to live cheerfully and contentedly, in the midst of all the imperfection and instability of our fate.*

This art, he says,² is not shewn to us in a strictly connected whole, but in a collection of single observations and sentences. Just as Canticles is a

¹ Salomo's Prediger oder Koheleth's Lehren, von Johann Ernst Christian Schmidt. Gießen, 1794, pp. 23, 82, 100.

² Der Zweck dieses Buchs ist, zu lehren, wie man bei aller Unvollkommenheit und Unbeständigkeit seiner Schiffsaale dennoch froh und zufrieden leben könne. Diese Kunst wird aber nicht in einem streng zusammenhängenden Ganzen, sondern in einer Sammlung einzelner Betrachtungen und Sentenzen gezeigt;—so wie das Kantikum eine Kollektion kleiner Gedichte, so ist der Prediger eine

collection of small poems, so Ecclesiastes is a collection of larger or smaller moral essays and admonitions. It is the production of some later writer, who perhaps lived after the Babylonish captivity, and had either no perfect command of the language, or wrote it in this book very incorrectly and negligently, and in the assumed person of Solomon; just as Cicero, in his *De senectute*, spoke in the name of Cato, *ut majorem rem auctoritatem haberet oratio*.

1798.—The various theories hitherto advanced about the import and division of Coheleth sink into utter insignificance before the discoveries made by the learned and lynx-eyed Nachtigal. *This book*, he tells us,¹ *contains the investigations of several associations of literary men among the Israelites; it contains propositions which at that time formed the limits of philosophic speculation, and which seem to have been proposed intentionally, to agitate and to explain doubts, and thus to develop the intellectual faculties.*

The book consists of the following parts, although not indicated by the Massorites:—

I. PROSAIC PARTS, or later additions and remarks, made by several classifiers, collators, and readers of this book. These are—

1. The superscription, i. 1.
2. The words, כְּהִלֵּיתִי, i. 2; vii. 27; xii. 8.
3. The additions at the end, xii. 8–14.

II. POETICAL PARTS, constituting the chief portions of the book, and consisting of three kinds of poetry.

Kollektion größerer oder kleinerer moralischer Aufsätze und Ermahnungen. Er ist das Werk irgend eines späteren Schriftstellers, der vielleicht gar nach dem babylonischen Exil lebte, die Sprache entweder nicht ganz in seiner Gewalt hatte, oder sie wenigstens in dieser Schrift sehr inkorrekt und nachlässig schrieb, und in der angenommenen Person Salomos, wie Cicero bei seinem Schriftchen: *de senectute* in Catos Sprach, *ut majorem auctoritatem haberet oratio*.—Beiträge zur Erklärung des sogenannten Hohenlieds, Koheleths und der Klaglieder von Professor Gaab. Tübingen, 1795, pp. 48, 49.

¹ Dieses Buch enthält die Forschungen mehrerer Versammlungen denkender Männer unter den Israeliten; es enthält Sätze, die damals die Gränze der philosophischen Speculation waren, und die zum Theil absichtlich vorgelegt zu seyn scheinen, um Zweifel und Beleuchtung der Zweifel anzuregen, und so die Geisteskräfte zu entwickeln—Koheleth oder die Versammlung der Weisen, gewöhnlich genannt der Prediger Salomo's. Bearbeitet von J. E. C. Nachtigal. Halle, 1798, p. 67.

1. *Antiphonies*, i. e., a poetical treatise upon one subject, made by different singers, who partly define more minutely the idea which constitutes the subject of conversation; sometimes correcting the expressions of other singers, but mostly corroborating the main proposition in question, and exhibiting its different sides without intending to contradict.

The way in which these songs originated was perhaps this: the President of the society of the Israelitish sages rose and sang, "*Vanity, vanity, all is vanity!*" The assembly repeated this verse as a chorus. Thereby the keynote was struck which determined the subject of conversation for this session, and gave an impetus to further investigation. The president now sang the fleetness and changeableness in human life, and in nature generally; and the assembly joined in at every pause with, *Vanity, vanity, all is vanity!* Another singer rose after the president, and sang in the name of Solomon, the most admired Jewish king, and who was considered as having had most of the enjoyments of this life, the vanity of all that is looked upon as happiness upon the earth, and of all human plans, and the assembly of singers, at appropriate places, animated the song with their accords. When this singer left off, or the ideas of the sentences belonging to him were exhausted, a third singer arose, then a fourth, then a fifth, &c., &c., &c. Each endeavoured to corroborate the same idea by some illustrations, to exhibit it in some different shade, and also to correct here and there the remarks of the other singers.

A careful comparison of these single sections will, it is to be hoped, convince every unprejudiced person that the different spirit which breathes in them, as well as the difference in the mode of treating the subject, indicate different singers. Compare, for instance, chap. i. 12–ii. 26, with chap. iii. 1–8, 9–15, 16–22; chap. iv. 1–6, 7–9. The other antiphonies (viz., chap. v. 9–vi. 9, and viii. 8–x. 1), which are separated from the first (viz., chap. i. 2–iv. 16) by proverbs, &c., &c., were most probably sung at other sittings of the same assembly of sages, or perhaps in similar assemblies of other Jewish sages, formed immediately after the first. The last group of antiphonies (chap. xi. 7–xii. 7) is, in its main parts, treated differently from the others, and can hardly be ascribed, in its present form, to the same assembly of sages to whom the first three groups most probably belong.

Two things connected with these songs, and influencing their explanations and mode of treatment, still deserve to be noticed—1. *Most of the singers in this book appear in the person of a philosopher of antiquity*; compare, for example, i. 12; iii. 16; iv. 1. 7; v. 12; vi. 1; vii. 15; viii. 9. 16; ix. 11. Solomon, who is one of the sages here introduced, and who also appears in the Book of Wisdom, is easily recognised. The other sages we shall perhaps never know, owing to the want of historical identifications. 2. In many of these antiphonies, we notice a singular interweaving of ideas, which to us occidentals appear to be widely separated; comp. ii. 3, with ver. 1; ii. 9 with i. 16; ii. 18, 19, with 12, 13; iii. 11–14 with ii. 24–26.

2. *Maxims of the sages*, of which there are three collections in our book —

1. chap. iv. 17 - v. 8. 2. chap. vi. 10 - vii. 2. 3. chap. x. 2 - xi. 6.

Some of these maxims are evidently connected together (only they are sometimes separated in the present recension of the original, *e.g.*, vii. 14, 18, 16, 17, 20); some even seem to have such a bearing to each other as the antiphonies, *i.e.*, are occasioned by the same idea, but expressed by different minds, and we may describe these as anti-maxims (*Gegensprüche*); as, for example, vii. 1 - 9; x. 16 - 19. Most of the maxims, however, are now so separated and isolated that all the exertions of commentators have failed to connect them with the other portions of the book. Several questions suggest themselves upon this point, *e.g.*, How did these maxims originate? What connection have they with the assembly of sages? What connection with the antiphonies? To what periods are they to be ascribed? or Do they belong to one period? &c., &c. We may perhaps assume that the making of such gnomes was assigned to a special sitting of the assembly of sages; or that a few singers appeared with some maxims, after a group of antiphonies, as a relief; or that the collator who collected and compiled the antiphonies sung in the assembly of Jewish sages, also found collections of maxims which partly belonged to the same sages, and connected with the others as one whole, because they indicated a similarity in composition and spirit. The second hypothesis will appear the most probable one, to one who regards the present arrangement of this book; and the third, to one who has no regard for it.

3. *Hidden questions, or propositions and their solutions.* Of this mode of treatment, so common among the sages of the East, we have in this book only a small collection, namely, vii. 23 - viii. 7, where we find two hidden questions and their solution.

The following is Nachtigal's view of Coheleth : —

Superscription, chap. i. 1.

I. Antiphonies, chap. i. 2 - iv. 16

Chorus, chap. i. 2

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. (I. 1.) chap. i. 3 - 7 | 8. (II. 6.) chap. ii. 16, 17 | 15. (V.) chap. iii. 16 - 22 |
| 2. (I. 2.) 8 - 11 | 9. (II. 7.) 18, 19 | 16. (VI.) iv. 1 - 6 |
| 3. (II. 1.) 12 - 15 | 10. (II. 8.) 20, 21 | 17. (VII.) 7 - 9 |
| 4. (II. 2.) 16 - 18 | 11. (II. 9.) 22, 23 | 18. (VIII.) 10 - 12 |
| 5. (II. 3.) ii. 1, 2 | 12. (II. 10.) 24 - 26 | 19. (IX.) 13 - 16 |
| 6. (II. 4.) 3 - 11 | 13. (III.) iii. 1 - 8 | |
| 7. (II. 5.) 12 - 15 | 14. (IV.) 9 - 15 | |

II. Maxims of the sages, chap. iv. 17 - v. 8

- 1 chap. iv. 17 2 chap. v. 1 - 6 3. chap. v. 7, 8

III. Antiphonies, chap. v. 9 - vi. 9

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. chap. v. 9 - 11 | 3. chap. v. 17 - 19 | 5. chap. vi. 7 - 9 |
| 2. 12 - 16 | 4. vi. 1 - 6 | |

IV. Maxims of the sages, chap. vi. 10 - vii. 22

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. chap. vi. 10 | 8. chap. vii. 3, 4 | 15. chap. vii. 14 |
| 2. 10 | 9. 5, 6 | 16. 18 |
| 3. 11 | 10. 7, 8 | 17. 15 |
| 4. 11 | 11. 9 | 18. 16, 17 |
| 5. 12 | 12. 10 | 19. 19 |
| 6. 12 | 13. 11, 12 | 20. 20 |
| 7. vii. 1, 2 | 14. 13 | 21. 21, 22 |

V. Obscure questions, and their solutions, chap. vii. 23 - viii. 7

1. First Question, with six answers, chap. vii. 23 - viii. 1
2. Second question, with two solutions, chap. viii. 1 - 7

VI. Antiphonies, chap. viii. 8 - x. 1.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. chap. viii. 8 - 10 | 5. chap. ix. 1 | 9. chap. ix. 11, 12 |
| 2. 11 - 13 | 6. 2 - 4 | 10. 13 - x. 1 |
| 3. 14, 15 | 7. 4 - 6 | |
| 4. 16, 17 | 8. 7 - 10 | |

VII. Maxims of the sages, chap. x. 2 - xi. 6

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. chap. x. 2 | 8. chap. x. 11 | 15. chap. xi. 1 |
| 2. 3 | 9. 12 - 14 | 16. 2 |
| 3. 4 | 10. 14 | 17. 3 |
| 4. 5 | 11. 15 | 18. 4 |
| 5. 6, 7 | 12. 16, 17 | 19. 5 |
| 6. 8, 9 | 13. 18, 19 | 20. 6 |
| 7. 10 | 14. 20 | |

VIII. Antiphonies, chap. xi. 7 - xii. 7

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. chap. xi. 7 - 8 | 3. chap. xii. 1, 5 |
| 2. 9, 10 | 4. 6, 7 |

Prosaic additions, chap. xii. 8 - 14

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1. chap. xii. 8 | 4. chap. xii. 11 | 7. chap. xii. 12 |
| 2. 9 | 5. 12 | 8. 13, 14 |
| 3. 10 | 6. 12 | |

1802. — The third volume of Dr. Coke's commentary, containing Ecclesiastes, was published in 1802.¹ The commentary

¹ A Commentary on the Holy Bible. By Thomas Coke, LL. D., of the University of Oxford. London, 1802, vol. iii., p. 395, &c.

on this book, like that on all the other portions of the Bible, is mostly a reprint of the unfortunate Dr. Dodd's work; and as the latter adopted Desvoeux's view, that *the design of the book is to prove the immortality of the soul, or rather the necessity of another state after this life* (see p. 179), the former, of course, also espoused it. We could never discover why Dr. Coke so unceremoniously appropriated this work, except that he thought it more to the glory of God that an exposition on the Bible should have the name of a respectable Wesleyan doctor, rather than that of a clergyman of the Church of England who had died upon the scaffold.

1804.—The brief notes of Dr. Priestley on Ecclesiastes, contained in the second volume of his notes on the Scriptures, have the advantage of embodying in a little space the old view, that *the object of the whole work is to shew the vanity of the ordinary pursuits of mankind; in what the true enjoyment of life consists; and the importance of having a constant respect to God, and the laws that he has prescribed to us.*¹ We are, however, surprised to find that this famous Unitarian doctor, who insisted so much upon strictly literal and grammatical exposition and criticism, should paraphrase —

Chap. iii. 21. *Who knoweth the spirit of man, &c.*—What difference is there between the breath of life in man, and that which animates a beast, *except that the one breathes upwards, and the other downwards?*

1813.—Though Adam Clarke has done nothing towards elucidating the design of *Cohleth*, inasmuch as he adopts the opinion of the Turkey merchant,² and of so many others besides, that *the subject of the book is the chief or sovereign good, which man, as a rational and accountable being, should here propose to himself*; yet he has done good service in disputing two points tenaciously held in England, viz., *the penitential character of*

¹ Notes on all the Books of Scripture, for the use of the pulpit and private families, in four volumes. Northumberland, vol. ii., 1804, p. 279, &c.

² *I'de supra*, p. 183.

Solomon as described in this book, and *the purity of the diction*. He says —

I can by no means adopt the hypothesis, that the book was written by Solomon after he was restored from his grievous apostasy. This is an assumption that never was proved, and never can be. I must say, the *language and style* puzzle me not a little. *Chaldaisms and Syriacisms* are certainly frequent in it, and not a few *Chaldee words and terminations*; and the style is such as may be seen in those writers who lived at or after the captivity. If these can be reconciled with the age of Solomon, I have no objection; but the attempts that have been made to deny this, and overthrow the evidence, are in my view often trifling, and generally ineffectual. That Solomon, son of David, might have been the *author* of the whole matter of this, and a *subsequent writer* put it in his own language, is a possible case; and, were this to be allowed, it would solve all difficulties.¹

1818.—The view, that this book treats on *the sovereign good*, is also entertained by Umbreit, in his commentary, which he characterises as *Cohleth, the wise king's struggles of the soul.*² The only novelty about this production is the arbitrary way in which the author transposes the text. According to him the order is this —

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| chap. i. 1 - v. 8 | chap. x. 11 | chap. ix. |
| viii. 2 - 19 | vii. 7, 19 | x. 1 - 3, 12 - 15, |
| vi. 1 - 12 | viii. 1 | 4 - 7, 16, 19, 18, |
| vii. 1 - 10, 13, 11 | vii. 14, 15, 16, 20 | 8, 9, 17, 20 |
| x. 10 | 17, 18, 21 - 20 | xi. |
| vii. 12 | viii. 14 - 17 | xii. |

Adopting this, he assures us we shall be all right.

1821.—We do not wonder that Dr. Ralph Wardlaw, in his Lectures on the Book of Ecclesiastes, should still adhere to the traditional opinion, that this book contains Solomon's repentance; that "*we behold him here, after a temporary apostasy from the Lord God of Israel, 'confessing, and forsaking, and finding mercy;*" *we behold him returning from the broken and*

¹ The Holy Bible, with a commentary and critical notes. By Adam Clarke, LL.D., F.S.A., &c. London, 1836, vol. iii., p. 2524.

² Das Buch welches in der Reihe der alttestamentlichen Schriften den Namen „Worte Kohleth's" trägt, behandelt kein andres Thema, als dieses: Was ist des Menschen höchstes Gut? Kohleth's des weisen Königs Seelenkampf oder philosophische Betrachtungen über das höchste Gut, von Friedrich Wilhelm Carl Umbreit. Göttingen, 1818, p. 10.

empty cisterns of the world to the Fountain of living water."¹ Dr. Wardlaw does not pretend to be critical; and when he does go out of his homiletic province, to correct the authorised version, he is generally wrong.

1822.—But we are astonished that Mr. Holden, in his elaborate work, should have altogether ignored the remark of Dr. Adam Clarke, that *it never was and never can be proved* that Solomon wrote this book *after* he was restored from his grievous apostasy; and should still maintain, that "*when, by the grace of that Almighty Being whom he had offended, Solomon was made sensible of his transgression, he became a sincere penitent, and published to the world the evidence of a broken and contrite heart in the book of Ecclesiastes.*"² He says—

The leading object of the Ecclesiastes is an inquiry into the Sovereign Good, which the author conducts upon the plan of first proving what does not constitute it, though too often regarded in that light by the folly of mankind; and, in the next place, shewing that it consists in Wisdom, or Religion, which, for that reason, is highly extolled. The book, in fact, may be considered as designed to praise and recommend True Wisdom to the observance of men, as the only real and permanent good.³

Mr. Holden, moreover, tells us, that Solomon has divided the book *into two parts and thirty-three sections.*

PART I., which extends from i. 2 to vi. 9, is taken up in demonstrating the vanity of all earthly conditions, occupations, and pleasures, and consists of the following nineteen sections:—

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|--|------------|
| Sec. 1. The vanity of all earthly things . . . | chap. i. 2 |
| 2. The unprofitableness of human labour, and the transitoriness of human life . . . | i. 3-11 |
| 3. The vanity of laborious inquiries into the ways and works of man . . . | i. 12-18 |
| 4. Luxury and pleasure are only vanity and vexation of spirit . . . | ii. 1-11 |

¹ Lectures on the Book of Ecclesiastes, by Ralph Wardlaw, D.D., 2 vols. Glasgow, 1821. Second edition, 1838, vol. i., p. 7.

² An Attempt to illustrate the Book of Ecclesiastes. By the Rev. George Holden, M. A. London, 1822, p. lxxiv.

³ *Ibid.*, p. lxxii.

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|---|------------|
| Sec. 5. Though the wise excel fools, yet, as death happens to them both, human learning is but vanity . . . | ii. 12-17 |
| 6. The vanity of human labour, in leaving it they know not to whom . . . | ii. 18-23 |
| 7. The emptiness of sensual enjoyments . . . | ii. 24-26 |
| 8. Though there is a proper time for the execution of all human purposes, yet are they useless and vain; the Divine counsels, however, are immutable . . . | iii. 1-14 |
| 9. The vanity of human pursuits proved from the wickedness prevailing in courts of justice, con- trasted with the righteous judgment of God . . . | iii. 15-17 |
| 10. Though life, considered in itself, is vanity (for men die as well as beasts), yet, in the end, it will be very different with the spirit of man and that of beasts . . . | iii. 18-22 |
| 11. Vanity is increased unto men by oppression . . . | iv. 1-3 |
| 12. The vanity of prosperity . . . | iv. 4 |
| 13. The vanity of folly, or of preferring the world to True Wisdom . . . | iv. 5-6 |
| 14. The vanity of covetousness . . . | iv. 7-8 |
| 15. Though society has its advantages, yet dominion and empire are but vanity . . . | iv. 9-16 |
| 16. Errors in the performance of Divine worship, which render it vain and unprofitable . . . | v. 1-7 |
| 17. The vanity of murmuring at injustice; for, though the oppression of the poor and the perversion of judgment greatly prevail, they do not escape the notice of the Almighty . . . | v. 8-9 |
| 18. The vanity of riches, with an admonition as to the moderate enjoyment of them . . . | v. 10-20 |
| 19. The vanity of avarice . . . | vi. 1-9 |

PART II., which extends from vi. 10 to xii. 14, is occupied in eulogising wisdom; in describing its nature, its excellence, and its beneficial effects; and consists of the following fourteen sections:—

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| Sec. 20. Since all human designs, labours, and enjoyments are vain, it is natural to enquire, What is good for man? What is his Supreme Good? . . . | vi. 10-12 |
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The answer is contained in the remainder of the book.

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|--|--------|
| 21. The praise of character and reputation . . . | vii. 1 |
|--|--------|

22. Affliction improves the heart, and exalts the character of the wise vii. 2-10
 23. The excellence of Wisdom vii. 11-14
 24. An objection, with the answer vii. 15-viii. 7
 25. The evil of wickedness shews the advantage of True Wisdom viii. 8-13
 26. An objection, with the answer viii. 14-ix. 1
 27. An objection, with the answer ix. 2-x. 17
 28. The banefulness of sloth x. 18
 29. The power of wealth x. 19
 30. An exhortation against speaking evil of dignities x. 20
 31. Exhortation to charity and benevolence xi. 1-10
 32. An exhortation to the early cultivation of religious habits xii. 1-7
 33. The conclusion xii. 8-14

Mr. Holden's commentary is one of the best productions on Ecclesiastes in our language.

1823. — The ordinary divergency of opinion is again relieved by an extraordinary discovery of D. Gottlieb Philipp Christian Kaiser, Professor in Erlangen. He assures us that *'the lives of the kings of the house of David, from Solomon down to Zedekiah, are positively and plainly chronicled in this book in strict order, a fact which not one of all the translators or commentators for two thousand years has even as much as faintly dreamt of; that the overthrow of the Jewish state is pragmatically balanced in it; and that, through this historic key alone, is every chief difficulty removed from the way of interpreting this book.'* Kaiser says¹ —

We have here an unknown kind of oriental poetry, an allegorico-historico-didactic poem, which connects, in a veiled and collective manner, the spirit of historic pragmatism of the Hebrews and Jews, and which

¹ Keiner der auf uns gekommenen Uebersetzer und Ausleger, als solcher, seit 2,000 Jahren ahndete, daß in dem Buche das Leben der Davidischen Könige von Salomo bis Zedekia in strenger Ordnung sehr klar und bestimmt gezeichnet, der Umsturz des jüdischen Staates darin pragmatisch entwogen und durch diesen historischen Schlüssel jede Haupt-Schwierigkeit der Auslegung beseitigt wird. — Koheleth, das Collectivum der Davidischen Könige in Jerusalem, ein historisches Lehrgebieth über den Umsturz des jüdischen Staates, von D. Gottlieb Philipp Christian Kaiser. Erlangen, 1823, p. v.

² Wir lernen vielmehr hier eine noch unbekannte Dichtungsgart des Orients kennen, ein allegorisch-historisches Lehrgebieth, welches verschleiert und collec-

gives us occasionally really important solutions of the secret history of the Jewish kings, e.g., the conduct of Josiah towards the Egyptian king Necho. Moreover, through this key we also gain something in a dogmatic point of view, inasmuch as every stumbling-block disappears, and the author of Coheleth appears throughout consistently to attack unbelief and luxury; some of his remarks being ironical and satirical, as is evident from his calling the poem a satire in xii. 11.

Kaiser divides the book into sixteen sections —

- Sec. 1. Contains the prologue chap. i. 1-11
 2. The life of Solomon i. 12-ii. 11
 3. Contains the complaint about Solomon's successors, Jeroboam, king of Israel, and Rehoboam and Abijam, kings of Judah ii. 12-26
 4. The life of King Asa iii. 1-15
 5. The life of Jehoshaphat iii. 16-22
 6. The life of Jehoram iv. 1-6
 7. King Ahaziah and Queen Athaliah iv. 7-12
 8. Kings Joash and Amaziah iv. 13-16
 9. The life of Uzziah iv. 17-v. 19
 10. Contrast between Jotham and Ahaz, to the advantage of the former vi. 1-12
 11. Hezekiah, Manasseh, and Ammon vii. 1-14
 12. Reflections on Josiah vii. 15-viii. 13
 13. Gives the collective expression of the assembly with regard to the above-named sovereigns, especially with regard to Josiah and his successors, as well as the end of Jehoahaz viii. 14-ix. 10
 14. The life and end of Jehoiakim ix. 11-x. 4
 15. Reign of Jehoiachin and Zedekiah x. 5-xi. 8
 16. Conclusion xi. 9-xii. 14

The following specimen of Kaiser's interpretation of chap. iii. 16-iv. 12, comprising the lives of three kings, will shew how he overcame the most difficult portion of this book: —

tivisch den Geist des historischen Pragmatismus der Hebräer und Juden concentrirt, und sie und da wirklich wichtige aufschlüsse über die geheime Geschichte der jüdischen Könige ertheilt, z. E. über das Benehmen des Josia gegen den ägyptischen König Necho. Dogmatisch fällt durch den historischen Schlüssel auch aller Anstoß weg und der Verfasser des Koheleths bleibt sich in der moralischen Bekämpfung des Unglaubens und des Luxus durch und durch gleich; manche seiner Aeußerungen sind Ironie und Verhöhnung, wie er denn selbst sein Gebieth R. xii. 11 ein Spottgebieth nennt. Pp. xiii., xiv.

THE LIFE OF JEHOSEPHAT, chap. iii. 16-22.

iii. 16. *And, moreover, I saw, &c.* — וַיֵּרָא is primarily the infinitive, and means in returning, turning back, moreover. It is here equivalent to וַיִּפְּץ, I turned, I became a successor, or the kingdom turned, underwent a change in government, vide infra, iv. 1, and the explanation thereupon. Jehoshaphat succeeded Asa in Judah.

Under the sun, i.e., in a kingdom; here it means in the dominion of the ten tribes, or of Israel, as Jehoshaphat lived at the time when Ahab was king over Israel. Jezebel, Ahab's idolatrous wife from Sidon, wrote false letters in the name of Ahab, and got unprincipled boys, who gave false witness against Naboth, that he blasphemed God and the king. Whereupon Naboth was stoned, and Ahab confiscated his vineyard (1 Kings xvi. 29, &c., xxi.) Then Elijah prophesied of Ahab: "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine;" and of Jezebel: "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel." Both these were fulfilled. Jehoshaphat lived to see the tragical end of Ahab, and took part in the war which the latter waged against the Syrians, and in which he perished, and Jehoshaphat escaped with great difficulty. Immediately after this war, in which Ahab received the reward of unrighteous judgment and of unjust possessions, Jehoshaphat set up righteous judgment and judges in Israel, and said to the judges, "Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord" (2 Chron. xix. 1-6).

17. *God shall judge, &c.* — This refers to the name Jehoshaphat, יְהוֹשָׁפָט, which signifies *Jehovah judges*. His name itself may also have reminded him of his duty to institute righteous judgment. NOMEN ET OMEN HABUIT. שָׁם, there, i.e., in the place of judgment. There is no necessity, with Houbigant and Döderlein, to alter the reading.

18. *I said in my heart, &c.* — Are the sons of men (the rulers) beasts to themselves? do they make themselves beasts? The corpse of Jezebel, which was thrown down from the window and eaten by the dogs, became a נֶקֶלָה, *carcase, a beast*, though she was the daughter of a king (2 Kings ix. 34). According to verse 37 of the same chapter, her carcase became "as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel," referring to אִמָּץ, which signifies *no dung*. Isaiah speaks with fearful earnestness of this circumstance (v. 23-25), and probably Ps. xlix., in which the word נֶקֶלָה is used of man (ver. 14), was composed on this event. Comp. also ver. 5; Ezra, viii. 29; Sirach xl. 3-8. The forty-ninth Psalm was copied for the sons of Korah; and at the time of Jehoshaphat they sang songs, according to 2 Chron. xx. 19. The eighty-fifth Psalm, too, was composed with reference to Jehoshaphat's upholding justice; comp. ver. 11-14.

19. מִיּוֹתֵי הָאָדָם כִּן הַחֲזִיקָה אֵין has rightly been rendered by Van der Palm, *neque de homine plus reliquum est (erat), quam de bestia*. It refers to the fact, that of the body of Jezebel, only the skull, hands, and feet were left. This historical reference does away with the dispute, whether the author could

have uttered in vexation anything which is dogmatically not true. He has simply narrated a historical event. In verses 21 and 22, however, he speaks ironically, in the name of a collective king, whose principles were not firm.

20. *All go to one place.* — Here, too, many have thought that it is asserted that everything is of dust, whereas it still refers to the history of Ahab and Jezebel, to which allusion is also made in Isa. v. 23-25, "which justify the wicked . . . and their blossom shall go up as dust . . . their carcases are as dung in the midst of the streets." In this sense the word *dust* also occurs in the sequel, chap. xii. 7 (i.e., as the extinction of the royal dignity); compare also 1 Kings xxi. 21, where the destruction of Ahab is spoken of.

21. *Who knoweth.* — Some have endeavoured to find epicurean sentiments in this verse, whereas the very reverse is what he taught. The sense is: I (collective-king, not the author of this book) thought it sometimes uncertain, especially at this awful event, whether the spirit of man goes upwards (i.e., to God), and has an advantage over the spirit of beasts. The author himself says the very reverse, in xii. 7.

22. *Wherefore I perceive.* — Therefore I thought that sensual pleasure is good, because no one could know what shall be after this life. This is again ironically spoken, respecting the unbelief of leaders who are the source of luxury.

THE LIFE OF JEHOAM, chap. iv. 1-6.

Chap. iv. 1. *And I turned.* — וַיִּפְּץ means, my dominion got another ruler (comp. 1 Kings ii. 15), the kingdom has changed hands (1 Chron. xi. 14. 23; and supra, ii. 20). Commentators incorrectly render it *adverbially*, i.e., *I considered again, &c.*

Oppression, &c. — Jehoram commenced his reign by killing his six brothers, to whom their father Jehoshaphat had given fortified cities, 2 Chron. xxi. 1, &c.; 2 Kings, viii. 16, &c.

2. *And I praised, &c.* — מְבֹרָךְ is a verbal adjective, construed with בָּן, and denotes *esteemed happier*; the Sept. εὐφραίνω, better Symmachus εὐμαχρίσθαι. Thus Cræsus exclaimed upon the stake, in the words of Solomon, "No one is to be esteemed happy before his death!" Plut. vit. Sol.

4. *Again I considered.* — רָגַז, *jealousy*, is fear for the rule of his brothers.

5. *The fool (הִקְטִיל)* Jehoram also served idols. Besides, he was a fool because he entangled his own hands, that is, did not unite himself with his brethren. Comp. מִן הַבָּנִים iii. 5.

He ate his own flesh, that is, executed his own brothers. Compare Judges ix. 2, where a brother is called the *flesh* (בָּשָׂר) of his brother; and also the phrase, *to eat the flesh of a people*, Micah iii. 3. Relations by blood are called in Scripture the same flesh, because of their kindred stock.

6. *Better a handful, &c.* — Jehoram had nothing but travail and vexation of spirit and conscience by his bad earthly gain. The Edomites and Libnah

revolted against him; the Philistines and the Bedouin Arabs took away all his substance, his wives, and his sons, except Ahaziah; and he died of a loathsome and sore disease in his bowels, probably dysentery, and was not buried in the sepulchre of the kings.

KING AHAZIAH AND QUEEN ATHALIAH, chap. iv. 7-12.

7. *And I turned, &c.* — A new vanity! a new misfortune in the kingdom!

8. *There is one, &c.* (אֶחָד אֵין מִלְּךָ). — Ahaziah was the only remaining son of Jehoram; Jehu raised himself to the throne of Israel, and not only killed the King of Israel, but Ahaziah, also, who reigned only one year; and we are told, in 2 Chron. xxii. 9, that none of the house of Ahaziah could again become king; comp. 2 Kings viii. 25.

He hath neither son nor brother (לֹא בֶן וְאֶחָד לוֹ). — Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, destroyed all the seed-royal which remained in Judah; no son, no brother of Ahaziah could immediately succeed him; his mother, Athaliah, undertook the government. However, a son of Ahaziah, twelve years old, was secretly obtained. But Ahaziah had no advantage from his restlessness, wherewith he betook himself to the covenant with Israel, and the war with the Syrians.

9. *Two are better than one.* — To preserve the royal family, a covenant was made in the meantime. Jehoiada, the high priest, took Jehoshabeath, the sister of King Ahaziah, to wife; the same hid the child Joash, and her husband made a covenant with — 1. The captains; 2. The Levites and priests, as well as the guards; 3. The heads of the families. After the ambitious woman, Athaliah, had reigned six years, the plan to put Joash upon the throne was carried out. The high priest received for it "a good reward" throughout his life; he was already ninety years old when he carried out this plan, and reached the age of a hundred and thirty years, and, out of gratitude, was buried among the kings (2 Chron. xxiv. 16, 16).

10. *For if they fall, &c.* — אִם, *to raise up*, is also used in the sense of *preserving*, a ruler or generation (2 Sam. vii. 12). אִם must be taken for *when*, and *when*; comp. 8 Codd. Kenn. and Buxtorf, Lex. Chald. Talm. et Rabb., and *infra*, vi. 6; in this case the ה in אִם will appear more appropriate, i. e., *but if it should happen that the solitary one falls*.

11. *Again, if two lie together.* — This refers to the marriage of the aged Jehoiada with the king's sister. Commentators, not knowing this historical sense, and in keeping with their finding general lessons throughout this book, regard this as a commendation of married life, with which, however, the following proverb does not at all agree.

12. *And if one prevail.* — A third portion of those who committed perjury posted themselves in the Temple, another third beset the royal palace, and another stood at the gate; and the people were only allowed to be in the outer courts. Joash, who was hid in the Temple, was anointed; Athaliah, the idolatrous Israelitish princess, was slain; and the prince was led to the palace and to the throne amidst the rejoicings of the people (2 Chron. xxiii.

2 Kings xi.) The throne was preserved for the rightful sovereign by the efforts of the high priest; but never did a high priest seat himself upon the throne in the time of the kings.

Notwithstanding the ingenuity and learning displayed by Kaiser, we do not think that he has ever succeeded in inducing any one to adopt his theory.

1826. — After tracing these ingenious conceits, it is cheering to come to Ewald, whose *four pages* on Coheleth, subjoined to his work on the Song of Solomon, contain more critical acumen, and a clearer view of the true design of this book, than many a bulky volume noticed in this sketch. He says¹ —

The author, who is utterly unknown to us, was a pious Israelite — as is evident from traces in this book — whose heart was greatly touched with the sufferings of his brethren, and who felt himself compelled to impart unto them his well-meant written counsel under these oppressions. But he had no practice in writing, and it seems as if this book was his first production, the style being so little developed and compressed, and there being so little connection in the flow of his thoughts. The words are never strictly measured; the author frequently expresses himself too strongly, in the heat of his discourse; he frequently does not carry through his thought, and only hints at what is in his mind, and thus continually struggles with his thoughts and words. Hence the first and greatest obscurity, which, however, disappears when we become thoroughly acquainted with the mind of the venerated author. The author lived after the exile (I suppose about

¹ Der uns völlig unbekannte Verfasser war, nach den Spuren seines Buchs zu schließen, ein frommer Israelit, dessen Herz bei den Leiden seiner Mitbrüder bewegt ward und der ihnen schriftlich seinen wohlmeinenden Rath für die Drangsale der Gegenwart mitzutheilen sich gedrungen fühlte. Aber im Schreiben war er wenig geübt; fast scheint er diese Schrift zuerst geschrieben zu haben: so wenig gebildet und gedrängt ist die Sprache und so wenig zusammenhängend der Fluß der Gedanken. Die Worte sind nie streng abgemessen; oft brüdt der Verfasser eine Sentenz im Feuer der Rede zu stark aus, oft führt er den Gedanken nicht vollständig durch und deutet nur an, was in seinem Innern ist; und so kämpft er beständig mit seinen Gedanken und Worten. Daher die erste und größte Dunkelheit, die sich indeß hebt, wenn man sich mit dem Geiste des ehrwürdigen Verfassers ganz vertraut gemacht hat. Und dieser Verfasser lebte nach dem Exil (Nach meiner Vermuthung etwa 100 Jahr von Alexander), in einer kummervollen, Geist und Körper niederdrückenden Zeit, unter der Tyrannei übermüthiger Herrscher, umgeben von Verzweifeln und Irrenden.

Unter solchen Umständen lebte der fromme Verfasser. Er wollte das Unglück wenn nicht heben, doch lindern, indem er seinen Mitbrüdern heilsame Vorschriften für die gegenwärtige Schreckenszeit bietet. Er ratht zur Geduld

a hundred years before Alexander), in a time of mental and bodily oppression, under the tyranny of overbearing rulers, and was surrounded by desponding and erring people. He was therefore anxious, if not to remove, at least to mitigate their misfortunes, by offering salutary precautions to his brethren for those fearful times. He recommends them patience and endurance, caution and wisdom; he denounces rebellion and the expression of too liberal sentiments; but, above all, he directs his readers to a sincere fear of God, and to the thought that God will one day judge everything, and rectify that which is perplexing here upon earth; he finally advises them not to despond over their misfortunes, but to enjoy life with a cheerful heart and gratitude to God, before old age approaches with all its infirmities.

1827. — Henzius maintains that¹ the sacred writer shews in this book that course which weak man, who is unable to see through the intricacies of human life, ought to pursue, that he may be happy, in the midst of so much inconstancy and vanity as are attached to all things. Being persuaded that God is supreme ruler of the world, and that he provides with supreme wisdom for the affairs of man, and hoping for the immortality of the soul, he submits that we should enjoy and endure, with a pious resolution, whatever blessings and evils this present life brings with it, as ordained by God; and that we should endeavour, with every effort, to keep the laws of God in our various conditions of life.

und zum Ausharren, zur Vorsicht und Klugheit; er tadelt die Empörung und zu freien Reden; vor allem aber leitet er seine Leser zu einer echten Furcht Gottes und zu dem Gedanken, daß Gott einst alles richten und das auf Erden Ungleiche ebnen werde; er empfiehlt endlich, sich der zu großen Bekümmerniß über das gegenwärtige Unglück zu entschlagen, und lieber die Zeit des Lebens, bevor das hohe Alter mit seinen Schwächen komme, froh und mit Dank gegen Gott zu genießen. — Das Hohelied Salomo's übersezt mit Einleitung, Anmerkungen und einem Anhang über den Prediger von Dr. Georg Heinrich August Ewald, pp. 152, 153, 154. Göttingen, 1826.

¹ Agit auctor in hoc libro de ratione, quam homo debilis, qui vitæ humanæ implicitas difficultates clare perspicere minime possit, sequi debeat, ut in omnium rerum tanta inconstantia atque vanitate felix evadat. Persuasum sibi habens, Deum O. M. summum esse mundi rectorem summaque sapientia humanis rebus providere, animæ vero immortalitatem sperans tantum et verisimilem potius ducens quam certam in hanc abit sententiam; pia mente fruenda esse atque toleranda quæ præsens vita afferat bona et mala, tanquam a Deo immissa, summeque contendendum, ut in omnibus vitæ conditionibus leges divinæ observentur. — Progr. quo libri Ecclesiastæ argumenti brevis adumbratio continetur. Dorpat., 1827.

1830. — According to Rosenmüller,¹ the design of the book is to propound the sovereign good, which consists in enjoying the present life with a tranquil mind, and in leading a virtuous and pious life, so as to please God. Like many others, he divides the book into two parts; the first part (i. 2 – iv. 6) depicts the vanity of all earthly things, and the second (iv. 7 – xii. 7) shews what man ought to do by this vanity, to which is added an epilogue (xii. 8 – 14), giving a summary of the whole doctrine.

1831. — Köster submits that this book is² an oriental lecture to young men on that which is permanent in the vanity of earthly things.

He divides the book into four sections, with a prologue and epilogue: —

PROLOGUE (chap. i. 2 – 11). — Looking at the general vanity of earthly things, the question arises, What abiding thing has man? (ver. 2, 3) since generations come and go like the sun, wind, and rivers (4 – 7), and nothing really new takes place upon the earth (8 – 11).

SECTION I. (chap. i. 12 – iii. 22) treats upon the question, What is best, considering the vanity of that which is earthly? Or, What is absolute good?

SECTION II. (iv. 1 – vi. 12). — Which is the better of two opposite things? Or, What is relative good?

SECTION III. (vii. 1 – ix. 16). — The true wisdom of life in general.

SECTION IV. (ix. 17 – xii. 8). — The true wisdom of life in the particular conditions of life.

¹ Tum vero docet, summum bonum homini in eo ponendum esse, cum ut vitæ præsentis animo tranquillo suæque sorte contento fruatur, tum, ut pietati et virtuti studeat, quo propitium sibi reddat summum numem.

Ecclesiastæ liber duobus potissimum partibus absolvitur, quarum prior (cap. i. – iv. 16) in demonstranda vanitate rerum mundanarum et humanæ inprimis vitæ versatur, atque pleraque quæ homines moliuntur studia inania et fluxa esse ostendit; posterior (cap. iv. 17 – xii. 7) quidnam hominibus in hac vita inprimis spectandum studendumque sit docet, regulasque vitæ recte instituendæ vitiorumque cavendorum ex vitæ humanæ observatione tradit. Additur Epilogus (cap. xii. 8 – 14) qui et hujus libri usum commendat, et omnis in illo traditæ doctrinæ summam brevi complectitur. — Ern. Frid. Car. Rosenmülleri Scholia in Vetus Testamentum, Partis nonæ, volumen secundum. Lipsiæ, 1830, pp. 9. 10. 18.

² Eine morgenländische Rede an die Jugend, über das Bleibende in der Nichtigkeit der irdischen Dinge. — Das Buch Hiob und der Prediger Salomo's von Dr. Friedrich Burchard Köster. Schleswig, 1831, p. 118.

Epilogue (xii. 9-14).—The strivings of the Preacher to compile systematically wise maxims both for himself and others (9-11). The young man is therefore to follow these maxims only, and learn their main import (12-14).

1836.—According to Knobel,¹ *the design of Coheleth is to shew the nothingness of human life and efforts, and to impart and inculcate directions relative to it.* He divides the book into two parts, one *partial*, and the other *theoretical*; and, with the caution that we must not be too strict in tracing a logical sequence and plan, as the author was not very particular about it, he gives the following analysis of its contents:—

PART I. THEORETICAL (i. 2-iv. 16).—Cohleth begins with the theme of the whole book, that all is vanity (i. 2), and then proposes the question, What is the value of human efforts (3)? But, instead of giving a direct answer, he describes the permanent, fixed, unchangeable, and ever-returning course of things, to shew that the efforts of man to affect the course of things ordered and governed from above are ineffectual and vain (4-11). He also expresses this view about things generally (14), and illustrates it by two examples from his own experience, viz., striving after wisdom (12-18), and exertion for pleasure, pronouncing both these kinds of human efforts vain, because they cannot secure lasting good (chap. ii.) Whereupon he explains himself further about the cause of this state of things: all efforts are vain, because man is dependent upon time and circumstances, which God has powerfully and unalterably ordered in a fixed course (iii. 1-15). But perhaps moral and immoral efforts may have a certain effect, and therefore they are not altogether vain, and if the effect is not in this world, perhaps in that which is to come? This, however, is doubtful (iii. 16-iv. 3). The main principle deduced from this fruitlessness of human efforts, thus established and traced to its origin, is, that we are not to be too zealous in our efforts, nor be guilty of the contrary (4-12), since even our best exertions are temporary in their result, and are soon forgotten, which shews their vanity (iv. 13-16).

PART II. is PRACTICAL (iv. 17-xii. 7), and shews how the conduct of man ought to be regulated according to the above theory of life. It opens with directions about the practice of religion, visiting the temple, sacrifice, prayer, vows (iv. 17-v. 6). To this are joined directions about gain,

¹ Demnach wollte Kheleth die Nichtigkeit des menschlichen Lebens und Strebens nachweisen und eine darauf bezügliche Lebens-anweisung erteilen und ein-schärfen.—Commentar über das Buch Kheleth von August Knobel. Leipzig, 1836, p. 39.

enjoyment of earthly goods; he then speaks of covetousness and avarice; the advantage and disadvantage of earthly goods; the misfortunes which come upon man in consequence of wealth, wherewith he has not even been satisfied, or of which he can take away nothing when he dies, &c., &c. In short, earthly goods are the theme (v. 7-vi. 12). Hereupon follow directions about true wisdom and morality, contrasting therewith their opposites; moderate zeal, patience, contentment, and a conduct void of any impropriety whatsoever, are recommended; whilst sensual enjoyment, revelry, impatience, discontentment, and every sort of improper dealing, are repudiated. And lastly, he shews where immorality mostly abounds (vii. 1-29). To this are joined further directions about political conduct; every enterprise against the ruler is censured, because, if he is bad, he will be punished from above (viii. 1-15). Cohleth adheres for the present to the last thought, and treats, in a digression, upon the incomprehensible and unchangeable government of God, who lets the same thing happen to all men alike, so that no human efforts have those results which are calculated upon and expected (viii. 16-x. 3). Whereupon he returns to rulers, gives his opinion of them and their dealings, and proposes rules by which to regulate our conduct towards them (x. 4-20). The last practical directions are about benevolence, which is recommended (xi. 1-6). Having thus given us rules for all the exigencies of life, Cohleth inculcates once more very impressively the main principle, that we are cheerfully to enjoy life, but not without the fear of God (xi. 7-xii. 7), and repeats his theme (8).

Knobel's commentary is one of the most elaborate and thorough productions on Cohleth.

1837.—In his translation of Cohleth, Ewald had now an opportunity of developing somewhat more fully the opinion about the origin and design of this book, which he briefly had propounded in the appendix to the Song of Songs eleven years before, already noticed, p. 205. *The object of Cohleth*, according to him,¹ *is to admit cordially all that is true about the condition of his own times, and the limitedness of man generally, be it ever so bitter or sad; and also to discover that which is good, furthering, imperishable, as well as acceptable to the will of God, in the midst*

¹ Die Aufgabe war, alles Wahre über den Zustand jener Zeit und die Beschränktheit des Menschen überhaupt, und wäre es auch noch so bitter und schiene es noch so traurig, ganz der Wahrheit nach zugebend, dennoch das mitten im irdischen Wechsel, Unverlierbare so wie dem göttlichen Willen Angemessene zu erforschen und als das Wahre Gut des menschlichen Lebens klar zu bezeichnen.—Sprüche Salomo's, Kheleth von Heinrich Ewald. Göttingen, 1837, p. 183.

of earthly changeableness, instability, and suffering, and set it clearly before us as the real good of human life. He says —

As a new truth is here to be established in opposition to so many vain views and efforts, Coheleth is introduced as seeking and discovering the permanent good for man. He advances certain truths respecting the relation of things to God, and then compares therewith the different views and efforts of men, and finds much that is vain and empty. Though he tries and investigates all things, turning indefatigably to every side of the examination and perception, he does not the less strictly observe the great deficiencies and faults of his own times, and causes the voice of dissatisfaction and despair loudly to be heard about them. But, dissatisfied therewith, and seeking above all to impart peace and consolation, he quickly changes from an observing inquirer into an instructing and counseling senior friend, and to our great surprise advances the most beautiful maxims about caution and patience, fidelity and thoughtful industry. Not perfectly satisfied and satisfying, however, even with these detached wise maxims and admonitions, he at last concludes, from his observations, experiments, and researches, that there is no other lasting good for man than serene joy in God, comprising as it does everything else.

Ewald, like Köster, divides the book into four parts, or discourses —

DISCOURSE I. (i. 2 — ii. 26). — The speaker starts here simply with the vanity of all worldly things, and glances at the historical experience of Solomon. This is the most sad and melancholy portion of the whole work.

DISCOURSE II. (iii. 1 — vi. 9). — Here, too, he starts with the order of worldly things, and establishes the main theme from the disturbances in the then world, and begins already to intersperse it with soothing maxims.

DISCOURSE III. (vi. 10 — viii. 15). — He also establishes the main theme, from the inability of wisdom to solve the problems of life.

DISCOURSE IV. (viii. 16 — xii. 8). — The main theme is now completely finished, amidst references to the frequently despised wisdom, whereupon follows immediately the undisturbed admonition to lay hold of this as the demonstrated supreme and lasting good.

A POSTSCRIPT (xii. 9 — 14) gives some explanations about the author and the book.

Ewald's masterly translation and analysis of this book are accompanied by a few meagre and comparatively unimportant notes.

1838. — A very elaborate article on "The Philosophy of Ecclesiastes," appeared in the American Biblical Repository for

1838, by Dr. Isaac Nordheimer, the well-known author of the critical grammar of the Hebrew language. He entertains a similar view of the book to that of Piscator (*vide supra*, p. 123), viz., that its design is to ascertain and exhibit the obligations of man to himself, to his fellow-man, and to God.¹ The Hebrew grammarian thus philosophises upon the object of the book : —

When the mind, intent on investigating all the relations of life, goes onwards in its activity, without first examining into and ascertaining its own powers, in order thereby to regulate its demands and decisions, it is liable to fall into a scepticism whose effects on practical life are exceedingly hurtful. Thus, the man who has resolved to subject life to a rigid scrutiny; to ascertain with precision the obligations of man to himself, to his fellow-man, and to God; and to institute a minute inquiry into his future fate, with the view of adjusting his life and actions accordingly, may easily, in forming his conclusions, strike into a wrong path, which, instead of conducting him to the haven of contentment, may lead to his eternal destruction: unless he first resolves to ascertain the extent of the powers of his mind, that he may know what, as man, he may expect to attain, and then set bounds to his endeavours by selecting some definite object of pursuit. For, by entering thus unprepared on his examination of nature and life, whenever he met with the reverse of that which he had hoped to find true, or whenever he came to the knowledge of the many unaccountable contradictions and apparently inexplicable enigmas which exist in nature, in the fate of man, and in the relations of man to his Creator, he would either be induced to regard the world as a vale of misery, and consequently drag out his useless life in hopeless discontent; or, disheartened by the constantly recurring obstacles to his progress presented by the revolving course of events, he would deny the existence of everything exalted in nature, and thus degrade himself to a level with the brutes. To set bounds to this sinful endeavour, and to warn mankind of the danger attendant upon it, appear to have been the principal aim of the author of this book. In order to execute his arduous undertaking in the most effectual manner possible, he adopted, and with great propriety, the Socratic, or sceptical method of induction. The main feature of this method consists in a suspension of the final decision until the truth has been rendered perfectly evident, and the writer has it in his power to make assertions that shall be incontrovertible; hence it is the most perfect mode of attaining absolute certainty that can be conceived. In this manner it is that the author of Ecclesiastes institutes his examination into the powers of the human mind, which he carries to such fearful lengths that reason itself threatens to totter from its throne. All this is done in order to test its strength, and to bound

¹ Biblical Repository, vol. xii., 1838, p. 197, *seq.*

its sphere of action accordingly, to the end that it may not run in danger, from the impossibility of comprehending the highest phenomena in nature, of introducing into practical life the errors which are the result of such imperfect conceptions. And at last he arrives at the conclusion, that as reason can know itself in the form of human reason alone, it is utterly unable to penetrate the ultimate designs of the Deity, or even all the secrets of his works in nature, viz., that it can never succeed in discovering all the hidden powers which are constantly at work in the world; and that, consequently, man has no right to complain of the apparent contradictions he meets with, much less to suffer himself to be led by them into error?

Nordheimer intended this article to be an introduction to a new translation of Ecclesiastes, which, however, was never published.

1840. — More simple than the last-mentioned article, and more to the point, is the view which Stendel propounded, in the fourth supplement to his *Prælections on the Theology of the Old Testament*. He says '—

The design of this book is to shew that everything earthly is unstable and uncertain, and that we can therefore find no satisfaction in anything, or in any exertion which is exclusively regarded as the end of life; that nothing earthly will shew to us the Supreme Ruler of all, as such, distributing the blessings of life according to a fixed plan perceptible to the human eye, so that man might thereby be guided what to do and what to leave, in order to secure something that is satisfactory and enduring; that no striving after earthly good or enjoyment, the accomplishment of great works, or the acquisition of a good name, will lead him to that end; and that the rule for

¹ Der Zweck des Buchs ist nach der gegebenen Inhaltsübersicht dieser. Es soll gezeigt werden: alles Irdische ist unstet und unsicher; eben darum kann in Nichts, in keinem Streben, das ausschließlich als Lebensziel festgehalten würde, Befriedigung gefunden werden. Durchaus nichts Irdisches ist, was uns den höchsten Lenker aller Dinge als einen solchen nachweise, der nach festem, dem Menschen erkennbaren Plane des Lebens Glück vertheilt, so daß der Mensch hiernach sein Thun und Lassen einrichten könnte, um etwas Befriedigendes und Standhaltendes für sich zu gewinnen. Nicht Ringen nach irdischem Gut und Genuß, nicht Ringen nach dem Zustandbringen großer Werke, nicht Ringen nach gutem Namen führt ihn zum Ziele; es hat wohl jedes seinen Werth, und wer das eine oder das andere besitzt, ist je nach dessen innerem Werthe mehr oder minder besser daran, als der, welcher es entbehrt. Aber theils findet er doch nicht das Vollkommene darin; theils mag ein Anderer, der nicht so ängstlich darnach trachtet, es auch davon tragen; theils endlich kann es ihm auch unter den Händen entschwinden, und den gehofften Erfolg nicht für ihn haben. So ergibt sich als Regel für das Erdenleben, zu genießen, -- doch vorwurfsfrei zu

our earthly life is to enjoy, without contracting any blame, what God gives us to enjoy; to be active in the sphere of activity which God indicates, till enjoyment and activity gradually diminish by themselves, and terminate with death; that we are to look forward to a future judgment, where good and evil will be rewarded and punished, and regulate our conduct here accordingly.

1844. — De Wette's matured view of Coheleth is given in his last edition of the historical and critical introduction to the Old Testament. The doctrine of wisdom, he says, which Coheleth here propounds, is *the nothingness and uselessness of all things, and the reality of enjoyment alone.*¹

The following is his analysis of the contents of the book: —

| | |
|--|---------------|
| The main theme is, <i>All is vain and fruitless</i> | chap. i. 2, 3 |
| Reasons for it — | |
| 1. The aimless course of things | i. 4-11 |
| 2. The vanity of striving after wisdom | i. 12-18 |
| 3. The vanity of earthly enjoyment, and all the efforts to have it in connection with wisdom, although the gratification of desire has the highest value | ii. 1-26 |
| 4. The transitoriness and changeableness of all things, whereby gratification is again commended as the best thing | iii. 1-15 |
| 5. The prevalence of injustice and violence among men, since, without a future retribution, the end of man is like that of the beast; for this reason death is more to be desired than life, which, however, is to be enjoyed cheerfully | iii. 16-iv. 3 |
| 6. The vain efforts and strivings of men, commendation of quietness, and society | iv. 4-12 |

genießen, was Gott zum Genusse darbietet, und thätig zu seyn, wie Gott den Kreis der Thätigkeit zuweist, bis Genuß und Thätigkeit sich mehr und mehr von selbst verbietet, und durch den Tod sich schließt. Uebrigens darf und soll hier der Blick auf ein Leben der Vergeltung gerichtet bleiben, wo Gott als den Gerechten sich rechtfertigen wird, auf welchen deswegen unser ganzes Thun und Lassen stets gerichtet seyn muß. — Mitlin empfiehlt das Buch in Bezug auf die Gegenwart die Kunst, mit welcher Resignation das Leben als ein dem Wechsel unterworfenenes mit seinen Freuden und Leiden hinzunehmen und nach Kräften zu befruchten, die Vergeltung aber der Zukunft anheimzustellen, übrigens so zu leben daß man ihrer nicht mit Furcht gedenken müsse. — Vorlesungen über die Theologie des Alten Testaments von Dr. Joh. Christian Friedr. Stendel. Berlin, 1840, Beilage iv., pp. 524, 525.

¹ Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in das Alte Testament. Berlin, 1852, § 283.

7. The vanity of royal dignity . . . chap. iv. 13-16
Desultory maxims: Respecting the worship of God . . . iv. 17-v. 6
And respecting injustice . . . v. 7, 8
8. The vanity of striving after riches, and of avarice;
commendation of enjoying life . . . v. 9-vi. 9
Submission to one's fate, considering the vanity of
things . . . vi. 10-12
Desultory maxims, mostly of sceptical import . . . vii. 1-viii. 13
9. As, for instance, the fruitlessness of striving after
wisdom (vii. 23, &c.)
10. The unavoidableness of death (viii. 8.)
11. The prosperity of the wicked, adversity of the pious;
the incomprehensible government of the world . . . viii. 14-ix. 6
Commendation of pleasure . . . ix. 7-10
The superiority of wisdom, which, however, is
frequently of no avail . . . ix. 11-x. 1
Desultory maxims, mostly of a sceptical import . . . x. 2-xi. 6
An exhortation to enjoy life before old age
approaches . . . xi. 7-xii. 8
Conclusion and summary of the book, with some
information about Coheleth . . . xii. 9-14

This, according to De Wette, is all that Coheleth teaches; he gives *no hope of a future existence*, and the view which he propounds of the present life inclines to fatalism, scepticism, and epicureanism, as may be seen from the following passage:—

The doctrine of retribution on earth, elevated by no hope of a future state, which constitutes its religious principle, had to contend with powerful doubts, which the sad experience of life afforded, and which shew themselves already in Proverbs (xxiv. 19), and more plainly in the Psalms (xxxvii., lxxiii.) Now, the more unhappy and hopeless the times became, the more faith and inspiration grew cold, the more powerful these doubts became, and thus they formed themselves at last into the view of life as propounded by Coheleth, which inclines to fatalism, scepticism, and epicureanism.¹

¹ Die irdische, durch keine Hoffnung auf das Jenseits gehobene Vergeltungslehre, welche das religiöse Princip derselben ausmachte, hatte mit mächtigen Zweifeln zu kämpfen, welche die unglückliche Erfahrung an die Hand gab, und die sich schon in den Sprüchwörtern (xxiv. 19), deutlicher Ps. xxxvii., lxxiii., regen. Je unglücklicher und trostloser nun die Zeiten wurden, je mehr der Glaube und die Begeisterung erkalten, desto mächtiger wurden jene Zweifel; und so gestalteten sie sich zuletzt zu einer Lebensansicht, wie sie Coheleth vorträgt, die sich zum Fatalismus, Scepticismus und Epicureismus hinneigt (§ 282), which Stuart most grossly mistranslates: "The doctrine of retribution, which

1844. — Undeterred by the positive declarations of De Wette respecting the lowering character of this book, Lisco published the same year the second volume of his commentary on the Bible, containing Ecclesiastes, in which he maintains that the design of Coheleth is *to shew that a contented and cheerful enjoyment of life is the sum of human happiness upon earth, and that this is impossible without truly fearing God.*¹

He divides the book into eleven parts —

- Part 1. declares, *All is vanity* . . . chap. i. 1-11
2. proves it from the Preacher's own experience . . . i. 12-ii. 26
3. The vanity of all things recommends a cheerful
enjoyment of life . . . iii. 1-22
4. Further description of the vanity of earthly things . . . iv. 1-16
5. Different lessons, *All is vanity* . . . iv. 17-vii. 1
 - a. Man before God. iv. 17-v. 6.
 - b. The folly of covetousness, v. 7-16.
 - c. Hence cheerful enjoyment of life is best, v. 17-19.
 - d. Unhappy is the discontented rich man, vi. 1-vii. 1.
6. That which is good and that which is better . . . vii. 2-29
7. The wise conduct in various relations of life . . . viii. 1-17
8. The incomprehensible government of God . . . ix. 1-x. 3
9. Different admonitions how to conduct oneself . . . x. 4-xi. 6
10. Enjoy life wisely . . . xi. 7-xii. 8
11. Concluding remark . . . xii. 9-14

1845. — In 1845 appeared Mr. Preston's translation of Mendelssohn's commentary on Ecclesiastes, with additional

constitutes the religious element of the book, has many strong doubts to contend with, and these his own experience of misfortunes helped to supply. . . . The more unhappy the times were, and the more they led to despair, the more also that belief and animation grew cold, the stronger did those doubts become; so that they finally shaped themselves into the ordinary system of *Epicureanism* joined with *Fatalism*. This the author of the book professes." Commentary on Ecclesiastes, p. 25.

¹ Zweck ist ihm die feste Begründung der Ansicht und Ueberzeugung: Ein froher, heiterer Genuss des Lebens ist die Summe des menschlichen Glückes auf Erden, er ist aber ohne wahre Gottesfurcht nicht möglich. — Das Alte Testament mit Erklärungen, Einleitungen, Auffäßen und Registern, von Friedrich Lisco. Zweiter Band. Berlin, 1844, p. 267.

notes by the translator.¹ As Mr. Preston adopts the view of that distinguished philosopher, we refer to p. 78, &c., for the analysis of his exposition. Preston, however, differs from his "guide" in the division of the book, inasmuch as he makes it to consist of *seventeen* sections.

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| § 1. chap. i. 2-11 | § 7. chap. iv. 4-16 | § 13. chap. x. 16-20 |
| 2. i. 12-18 | 8. v. 1-20 | 14. xi. 1-6 |
| 3. ii. 1-2 | 9. vi. 1-vii. 14 | 15. xi. 7-xii. 8 |
| 4. ii. 3-12 | 10. vii. 15-viii. 1 | 16. xii. 9-12 |
| 5. ii. 13-26 | 11. viii. 2-ix. 12 | 17. xii. 13-14 |
| 6. iii. 1-iv. 3 | 12. ix. 13-x. 15 | |

Mr. Preston's "original notes, philological and exegetical," contain a great deal of valuable matter, and are very superior to those of Mr. Holden.

1845.—The valuable article on Ecclesiastes, in Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature, has done more towards elucidating the true character of this book than any previous production in the English language. Though written by a foreigner (Hengstenberg), yet it must be looked upon as the first voice raised against the Salomonic authorship of Coheleth by an English orthodox cyclopædia. According to Hengstenberg, the book was written about the time of Malachi, when "the author had received the mission to treat professedly, and in a concentrated manner, the highly important sentence, *Vanitas vanitatum, omniaque vanitas*," in order to deduce therefrom some practical results. The practical application, says Hengstenberg, is placed before us in the following manner:²—

What is incumbent upon man, since everything else is naught? What real good remains for us, after the appearance in every seeming good has

¹ קהלת, the Hebrew text and a Latin version of the book of Solomon, called Ecclesiastes; with original notes, philological and exegetical, and a translation of the commentary of Mendelssohn from the Rabbinic Hebrew, &c., &c., by Theodore Preston, M.A., Fellow of Trinity College. London, 1845.

² A Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature, edited by John Kitto, D.D., F.S.A., vol. i., p. 596.

been destroyed? The answer is, Man shall not gain by cunning and grasping; shall not consume himself in vain meditations, nor in a hurried activity; he shall not murmur about the loss of that which is naught; he shall not, by means of a self-made righteousness, constrain God to grant him salvation; but instead he shall fear God (xii. 13; v. 6, 7), and be mindful of his Creator (xii. 1); he shall do good as much as he is able (iii. 12; and in other passages). And all this, as it is constantly inculcated by the author, with a contented and grateful heart, freed from care and avarice; living for the present moment, joyfully taking from the hand of the Lord what he offers, in a friendly manner. Man shall not be of a sorrowful countenance, but enjoy the gifts of God in quiet serenity. What would avail him all his cares and all his avarice? By them he cannot turn anything aside from him, or obtain anything, since everything happens as it shall happen.

1846.—In America, too, the progress of Biblical criticism gave a new tone to the interpretation of this book. Thus Dr. Noyes, in the introduction to his excellent version of Ecclesiastes, is of opinion that Coheleth was written about three hundred and thirty years before the Christian era, and, like Hengstenberg, maintains that *the main doctrine, or speculative view, of the author is the vanity of human things, that is, of human striving, and of human fortunes and experiences; and his most prominent practical precept is, that men should enjoy the present blessings of life as they come, without anxiety and over-strenuous exertions, relating to distant and future good.*¹

Dr. Noyes gives the following analysis of the book, consisting of *twelve* sections, to shew the correctness of his opinion about its design:—

The principal thought is first laid down, that all is vain and unprofitable (chap. i. 1, 2). This view the Preacher illustrates—

1. By the wearisome, ever-recurring changes which are taking place, without bringing to pass anything new, or leading to any new result, adapted to give satisfaction to the mind of man chap. i. 4-11

¹ A new translation of the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles, with Introductions and Notes, chiefly explanatory. By George R. Noyes, D.D., Hancock Professor of Hebrew, &c., &c., in Harvard University. Boston and London, 1846, p. 78.

2. By the dissatisfaction attending the pursuit of wisdom or knowledge 12-18
3. By the unsatisfactoriness of the pleasures of life, and of strivings after them, even when united with the pursuit of knowledge and philosophy ii. 1-11
4. The author then compares the pleasures of knowledge with those of sense, and recommends the tranquil and contented enjoyment of the blessings of life as the best of a vain world ii. 12-26
5. The vanity of human things is illustrated by their fixed changes, periods, courses, limits, and times. Hence the folly of anxiety and exertion to alter the unalterable, and the wisdom of making the best of them in obedience and submission to the Divine will iii. 1-15
6. By man's injustice and violence, and his resemblance to the brute, in respect to hardships and death. This, too, shews that the cheerful enjoyment of life, &c., is best iii. 16-22
7. By the sufferings of the oppressed, the envy towards the prosperous, the evils of avarice and solitude; the evils attendant on royalty, arising from the infirmities of its possessor, and the fickleness of the people (chap. iv.) Then follow some proverbial maxims respecting the worship of God (chap. v. 1-7); then proverbs recommending the quiet pursuit of agriculture, in preference to the agitating, avaricious pursuit of wealth (8-17); whereupon the advice is again given to enjoy with a tranquil mind the good things of life v. 18-20
8. The vanity of human things connected with wealth hoarded up without being enjoyed or used (vi. 1-6), and with insatiable desires (7-9). Then follows an obscure passage, apparently intended to illustrate the vanity of human things vi. 10-12
9. Then follows a series of maxims and precepts respecting the guidance, support, and consolation of men in their passage through life, recommending righteousness and piety, with occasional remarks on the vanity of human things, such as the vanity of striving after wisdom, the certainty of death, &c. vii. 1-viii. 13
10. Then follows a new illustration of the vanity of human things, drawn from the prosperity of the wicked and the sufferings of the righteous, and the impossibility of comprehending the ways of Providence, closing again with the practical exhortation to enjoy with a quiet and cheerful mind the good things of life viii. 14-ix. 10

11. A new illustration of the vanity of human life, drawn from the circumstances, that success does not always answer to a man's strength, wisdom, or other advantages, and that wisdom, with all its benefits to the public, often brings but little consideration to its possessor. Then follow various proverbial maxims, shewing the advantages of wisdom and prudence, and the evil of rulers unfit for their station, and designed to regulate their conduct in private and public. This section closes with a recommendation of liberality to the poor, and of diligent exertion in our appropriate pursuits, without an over-anxious solicitude respecting the issue of our labours ix. 11-xi. 6
12. The Preacher now exhorts to a cheerful enjoyment of life as it passes, and the putting away of care and sorrow, in view of that portion of life's vanity which consists in the evil days of old age, and of the long period of darkness in prospect (xi. 7-xii. 8). Then follows a repetition of the chief truth which has been illustrated in the work, namely, the vanity of human things; and the final recommendation of the Preacher, as the conclusion of the whole matter, and the whole business of man, namely, "to fear God and keep his commandments" xii. 9-14

1847. — Germany continued to furnish us with increasingly important works on Ecclesiastes. The brief commentary by Hitzig, contained in the seventh part of "The condensed Exegetical Manual to the Old Testament," penetrates as much into the design of the book, and the circumstances of the time which gave rise to it, as any of its more bulky predecessors. The author, says this learned critic,¹ was induced to write this book by the circumstances of his times. He wrote it not from mere inclination, but compelled by bitter necessity and for a practical end, *being desirous to teach how men are to adapt themselves to life*

¹ Zur Abfassung des Buches Koheleth bewogen den Verf. die Verhältnisse seiner Gegenwart. Nicht nach Willkür, sondern unter dem Zwange bitterer Nothwendigkeit schrieb er, zu einem praktischen Zwecke. Er wollte lehren, wie man sich überhaupt zum Leben stellen, wie man namentlich in einer Zeit, die also beschaffen, sich verhalten solle. — Der Prediger Salomo's. Erklärt von Dr. F. Hitzig; Kurzgefaßtes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament. Siebente Lieferung. Leipzig, 1847, p. 124.

generally, and how to act in a peculiar time like his. He divides the book into *three parts*, each consisting of four sections —

- PART I. describes the vanity of all things, shewn in chap. i. 2 - iv. 16
- Sec. 1. The vanity of all things, as well as of thinking about it i. 2 - 18
2. The vanity of wisdom exerting itself to secure happiness; conclusion deduced therefrom . . . ii. 1 - 26
3. That all things, and even man himself, have a time appointed by God iii. 1 - 22
4. That life is full of sufferings, painful exertions, and disappointments iv. 1 - 16
- PART II. shews how we are to act under a state of vanity, being himself as yet uncertain what rule of life to adopt; adduces conflicting maxims iv. 17 - viii. 17
- Sec. 5. How we are to regulate our life in the face of God's order iv. 17 - v. 19
6. The unhappiness of not enjoying enjoyments . . . vi. 1 - 12
7. Turning the loud disapprobations against the sinfulness of man vii. 1 - 29
8. The incomprehensible absence of just retribution leads to the folly of sin viii. 1 - 17
- PART III. prescribes our conduct in life more definitely, as the author himself had by this time arrived at more certain conclusions about it ix. 1 - xii. 8
- Sec. 9. Since annihilation follows this vain life, we must gain its cheerful side ix. 1 - 10
10. Wisdom is often of no use to the wise, but to others. The fool makes mischief, and brings misfortune upon himself ix. 11 - x. 20
11. How we are to act, having an uncertain future, old age, and approaching death before us . . . xi. 1 - xii. 8
12. Epilogue, giving some information about the author, and the design of the book xii. 9 - 14

Hitzig was closely followed by Moses Stuart, who has, however, not always understood his guide. Compare *infra*, p. 226, and especially the Commentary.

1848. — Whilst Hitzig, with his mastery of the genius of the Hebrew language, has thus supplied the scholar with a help to the understanding of this book, Heiligstedt aimed to furnish the student with a *grammatical* analysis of the text. As to the design of Coheleth, Heiligstedt maintains a similar view to

that of Rosenmüller, namely, *that it teaches that, in the midst of the prevailing vanity of all things worldly and human, supreme happiness consists in man's enjoying gladly and cheerfully the blessings and pleasures of this life; that the power of cheerfully enjoying the good things of life is a gift which God imparts to man; that it is not lawful for man, whilst thus enjoying the good things of life, to conduct himself immoderately and impiously, but that he should live uprightly, and be always mindful of God, the Supreme Judge and Creator.*¹

1848. — Simultaneous with Heiligstedt's commentary, appeared, in the *Studien und Kritiken*, a very masterly article on Coheleth, written by J. G. Vaihinger. He submits that *the design of the Preacher is to propound the immortality of the soul, wherein alone the solution of the otherwise inexplicable problems of life are happily to be found; and to encourage us to look forward to a future judgment, amid the discrepancies between the moral nature and fate of man.*² He tells us —

The book consists of four interwoven poetico-dialectic discourses, all treating upon the same theme, viz, the vanity of human life, as well as the object and aim of it. Each discourse consists of three parts, which are again subdivided into strophes and half strophes; the discourses resemble those contained in the first part of Proverbs, and especially those found in the Book of Job, only that they are much more complicated in the progress of their ideas.

¹ In omnium rerum mundanarum humanarumque vanitate bonum vitæ humanæ summum, verum et stabile nonnisi in eo constare, ut homo vitæ præsentis bonis et jucunditatibus læte et hilare fruatur; vitæ bonis læte fruendi facultatem esse donum, quod Deus homini impertiatur; tamen in illis vitæ bonis læte fruendis homini non licere immoderatum et impium se gerere, sed eum oportere in probitate manere et semper Dei, judicis sui summi et creatoris, memorem esse. — Franc. Jos. Valent. Dominic. Maureri Commentarius Grammaticus Historicus Criticus in Vetus Testamentum, vol. iv., sec. ii. Lipsiæ, 1848, pp. xii., xiii.

² Hieraus ergab sich mir als letzter Gedanke des Predigers die Absicht auf die Unsterblichkeit des Geistes hinzuweisen, in welcher allein die Lösung des sonst unentwirrbaren Räthsels des Menschenlebens sich glücklicherweise findet, und bei dem unbefriedigenden Verhältniß zwischen sittlicher Beschaffenheit und menschlichem Schicksal auf das jenseitige Gericht Gottes zu warten. — Theologische Studien und Kritiken. 1848, pp. 443, 444.

DISCOURSE I. (chap. i. 2–ii. 26) shows that by the eternal, unalterably fixed course of all earthly things, and the experience of the vain and unsatisfactory strivings after earthly wisdom and selfish gratifications, a God-fearing enjoyment of life, and accepting gratefully the present good, can alone constitute the end of our earthly existence.

DISCOURSE II. (chap. iii. 1–v. 19) shows that by the experience that all our efforts in the world depend upon time and circumstances, and that the success of human labour is altogether controlled by circumstances, the cheerful enjoyment of life, connected with the fear of God and humility, is to be recommended as the highest good.

DISCOURSE III. (chap. vi. 1–viii. 15) shows that by the observation that man is frequently deprived of the enjoyment of riches, acquired through the favour of God, either from the fault of others or his own, we must try in a nobler way to procure the real and cheerful enjoyment of life, by joyfully using earthly blessings, following higher wisdom, and avoiding folly.

DISCOURSE IV. (chap. viii. 16–xii. 8), considering the melancholy experience of the inscrutable government of God in the distribution of human destinies, nothing remains to us, besides the exercise of wisdom and the fear of God, for the quieting of our minds, but in looking forward to a retributive eternity, and to an otherwise cheerless old age, cheerfully and gratefully to enjoy the good and the beautiful in life, especially in our youth and in the vigour of our manhood.

The four discourses treat upon one main theme, namely, that human life and strivings are in themselves vain and unsatisfactory; prosperity and adversity, success and disappointment, depend entirely upon time and chance, or, in other words, upon the inscrutable government of God; and that the only end of existence would seem to be, to live a life of resignation, to enjoy cheerfully the good things it affords, forgetting all its evils, in connection with benevolence, wisdom, and the fear of God. But as man cannot of himself secure this, and, even if secured, it would in reality not be satisfactory, there must be, in spite of all doubt, a future judgment, where that adjustment will take place which is here sought in vain.

It is to be regretted that this excellent treatise is so much occupied with the needless investigation of strophes and half-strophes.

1848.—The strange version of Ecclesiastes by Francis Barham forms a lamentable contrast to these masterly produc-

tions on the Continent. In the preface of this translation we are told that *the main purpose of this book appears to be to describe the summum bonum, or chief good, and to delineate the best form of character and conduct which is most conducive to joyfulness or happiness.*¹

This, Solomon represents to be inseparably connected with piety towards God, and philanthropy towards man. Like the divine Messiah to whom he refers, and who often confirmed his words, he teaches us to evidence our religion by our conduct. He recommends useful industry or profitable labour, and a cheerful, thankful, temperate enjoyment of all temporal blessings, which are the proper rewards of persevering rectitude. He advocates a wholesome, generous, and genial system of divine philosophy, in which faith and adoration are blended with wisdom and virtue, usefulness and charity, peace and liberty. All these are represented to us in relation to the immortality of man, and the future judgment of the righteous and the wicked; and we are continually warned against the vanity and vexation of spirit by which the foolish and profligate are deceived and tormented. Such appears to me a true statement of certain facts, which render the Book of Ecclesiastes a most valuable epitome of theoretical and practical divinity.

The following is a specimen of this version:—

- Chap. i. 2.—In vain are vanities,
 In vain are vanities—all is vain.
 3. Some profit should man have;
 As all have their labour,
 Which they should execute under the sun.
 4. Therewith one generation advances,
 And another generation departs,
 And the earth fulfils its periods.

Yet we are told in the preface, “In a translation of the Holy Scriptures, beyond comparison with any other work, *the most exact fidelity to the original is of SUPREME importance*; because, just in proportion as we deviate from the true meaning, we lose its peculiar, its *unique* value, as the expression of the mind of the Divine Spirit.”

Not the least striking features about this production are the

¹ The Bible Revised, Part I. The Book of Ecclesiastes, by Francis Barham. London, 1848, pp. iv. vii.

flagrant literary blunders of which Mr. Barham is guilty. "Among the translators or explainers of Ecclesiastes," he says, "I would especially mention the names of the Jewish Targumists and Cabbalists, with Philo, Maimonides . . . Pilkington, &c., &c." A tyro in Hebrew literature must know that there is *only one* Targum on Ecclesiastes extant, and that Maimonides never wrote a commentary on this book. As for Philo, so far from having expounded it, there is not even a single quotation from Ecclesiastes to be found in his works. That Pilkington never published a commentary on it, has been shewn in the foot note, p. 132. We have given more space and prominence to Mr. Barham's work than it deserves, because he published it as *the first part* of "The Bible Revised," which we trust he will discontinue.

1849.—As Keil, in his continuation of Hävernicks's Introduction to the Old Testament,¹ adopted Vaihinger's view, we must refer to page 221, &c., for the analysis of it.

1850.—The American Biblical Repository contains another article on Ecclesiastes, which was delivered as a lecture by Professor Stowe, of Cincinnati.² The Professor's view of the book will be seen from the following extract:—

Solomon . . . seeking happiness in the things of earth . . . is disappointed and disgusted; and, instead of repenting of his errors, he becomes dissatisfied with the arrangements of Providence, misanthropic, and sceptical. His conscience, however, is not entirely asleep, but occasionally interposes to check his murmurings and reprove him for his follies. In this state of mind he is introduced, and in the character of Koheleth gives full and strong utterance to all his feelings. Hence, inconsistent statements and wrong sentiments are to be expected in the progress of the discourse; and it is not till the close of the book that all his errors are corrected, and he comes to "the conclusion of the whole matter," a humbled, penitent, believing, religious man.

1851.—Dr. James Hamilton found the Professor's view so

¹ Hävernicks's Handbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in das Alte Testament. Dritter Theil ausgearbeitet von Dr. Carl Friedrich Keil. Erlangen, 1849, pp. 434–464.

² Biblical Repository for April, 1850.

nearly akin to his own, that he copied it in the preface to his Lectures on Ecclesiastes,¹ from which we made the preceding extract. There is therefore no necessity for recapitulating the Doctor's view.

1851.—Professor Stuart, as has already been remarked, closely follows the opinion of Hitzig, both as to the design and division of the book, "bating the strong *neological* tendencies" of his guide. Thus he tells us, that the design of Coheleth is *to shew the vanity and utter insufficiency of all earthly pursuits and objects to confer solid and lasting happiness, and also to instruct his readers how to demean themselves accordingly.*² Like Hitzig, he divides the book into three parts, each part consisting of four chapters.

PART I. (chap. i. 2–iv. 16.)—Coheleth shews the vanity of human efforts, and of all earthly things in which men seek satisfaction. He begins with the unchangeable order of things in the natural world. Over this, man can acquire no influence, and have no control (i. 4–11). He then proceeds, in various ways, to illustrate and establish the position, that all human efforts to obtain abiding good in the present world are vain and fruitless. The acquisition of wisdom, or riches, or honours, and also indulgence in sensual pleasure, fail of their end. The most to which one can attain, is to enjoy the fruits of his toil in the sober gratification of the natural appetites. Providence has so arranged the vicissitudes of things, that they all have their regular course; and all that we can do is merely to submit to this, having no power to change or arrest it. After all the strivings of men, all go down to the grave, and perish in common with other living creatures around them. In fact, so multiplied are the sorrows of life, resulting from man's weakness, and springing from oppression, and from vain strife for wealth and defeated objects of ambition, that it is better to die than to live (i. 12–iv. 16).

PART II. (chap. iv. 17–viii. 17.)—Having thus established the general theory, he now gives practical instruction, beginning with religion. Frequenting the place of worship, prayer, offerings, and vows are here brought to view, and instructions are given. Thence he proceeds to descant on a variety of topics, with which the happiness and comfort of men are deeply

¹ The Royal Preacher; Lectures on Ecclesiastes, by James Hamilton, D.D., F.L.S. London, 1851, pp. ix., x.

² A Commentary on Ecclesiastes, by Moses Stuart, lately Professor of Sacred Literature in the theological seminary at Andover, Mass. New York, 1851, p. 23.

concerned. Several of these topics, *e.g.*, riches, wisdom, the oppression of rulers, &c., are introduced again and again, as occasion prompts, and in order to present them in all their important aspects. In the course of this part of his work divers objections are presented, some of which are answered forthwith, and some after intervening matter, which pressed upon his mind, has been thrown in.

PART III. (chap. ix. 1-xii. 8.) All doubts now disappear. The ultimate conclusions to which Coheleth has come, after examining into the whole matter before him, are now brought before us. God is supreme, and all things and all men are in his hands. He has made, and intends to make, no distinction between men as to their mortality and exposedness to suffering. This, although it is a source of much concern and sorrow, must be borne, as having been appointed by him. Rational and cheerful enjoyment, so far as practicable, he permits, and even enjoins. Moreover, wisdom may alleviate some evils, and prevent some others; so that, although it is not itself the chief good, and cannot of itself secure solid and lasting happiness, it may be of much use even in the common affairs of life. In the midst of exposure to oppression and misfortune, it may help to direct our conduct, so far as to avoid as much evil and secure as much good as is possible. A diligent observance of active duty, and a thankful enjoyment of what can be enjoyed, are the sum of what we can do to mitigate the sorrows and trials of life. Through all, and in all, with which we are concerned, and at all seasons of life, God is to be remembered, and also his judicial power to be recognised. Then comes a description of old age, and its preparation for and approach to the tomb, when the soul returns to God, to appear before his tribunal.

CONCLUSION (chap. xii. 9-14), wherein Coheleth gives a brief account of himself, and of his object in writing the book.

We have said before (p. 220) that Stuart does not always fairly represent Hitzig. Let the following specimen suffice. Referring to Hitzig's remarks on chap. vii. 26, Stuart says —

Hitzig seems to represent him [Coheleth] as expecting to find at least some of a good character among women, and as being disappointed in not finding them. Says he, *more suo*: Er denkt zu fischen und krebst, *i. e.*, he designs to catch fish, and catches crabs. But levity apart, his disappointment could not be great at not finding them among the class of women whom he describes. He was *grieved*, rather than disappointed.

Now Hitzig says nothing about *being disappointed* in the character of woman. What he says is, that to alight all at once upon the woman, in ver. 26, when he has declared, in ver. 25, that he was determined to find *wisdom, &c., &c.*, seems at first

sight as if he *caught crabs when he intended to fish*. The following are Hitzig's own words in their connection¹ —

Chap. vii. 25. *I turned, &c.* — The counsels given in ver. 16-24 have likewise displeased him, because, according to them, moderate sinning would be wisdom, and he knows, *a priori*, that sin is folly. Hence he now strives to find that it (sin) is really folly (*b*); in which case, that which is wisdom will soon be apparent, namely, the forsaking of sin. — חַיִּי is subordinate = *with my heart*, *i. e.*, *understanding*.

To know and to search. — The two accusatives belong to חַיִּי, before which the ו is not repeated, in order to separate it externally from the preceding infinitive. For חֲסֹן, see ver. 27.

26. *And I found, &c.* — On his way, Coheleth finds woman; *he intends to fish, and catches crabs*: how is that? Intending to find that sin is folly, he fixed upon a certain object; and we see that (בְּקַשׁ חֲכָמָה וְיָ), *his search after wisdom, &c.*, is directed, in the first place, to comprehend sin in its nature and consequences. Pursuing this object (comp. ver. 27, *b*), Coheleth finds that which he brings before us in this verse, namely, that he must search for sin where it grows, in man (Job v. 6, 7); and he looks for it at its very source (comp. Sirach xxv. 24), where it appears most marked; he goes to the woman, who was regarded in the East as morally weaker than man. Thus, she is brought forward as the representative of sin, as incarnate חַיִּי, wickedness.

We have thought it a duty to Sacred literature to clear Hitzig from this misrepresentation and charge of "levity," made by one who is more indebted to this scholar for his

¹ Die Rathschläge aber B. 16 ff. haben ihn ebenbüßhalb nicht befriedigt, weil ihnen zufolge ein mäßiges Sündigen Weisheit wäre, ihm aber *a priori* fest steht, daß die Sünde Thorheit seyn sollte. Also bestrebt er sich nun zu finden, daß sie auch wirklich Thorheit sey (*b*); in welchem Falle, was Weisheit sey, sich bald ergeben würde, nemlich die Sünde zu lassen. — וְיָ ordnet sich unter = mit meinem Herzen d. i. Verstande. Zu erkennen und zu forschen] Die beiden Akkus. gehören nur zu חַיִּי, vor welchem, um es äußerlich von den vorhergehenden Infinit. zu trennen, ו nicht wiederholt wird. — Ueber חֲסֹן s. zu B. 27. — B. 26. Auf seinem Wege findet Kōh. das Weib; er denkt zu fischen und krebst, — wie geht Das zu? Wenn er daß die Sünde Thorheit sey finden will, so hat er sich ein bestimmtes Ziel gesetzt; und wir merken, daß sein בְּקַשׁ חֲכָמָה zunächst darauf ausgeht, die Sünde in ihrem Wesen und ihren Folgen zu begreifen. Dieses Ziel verfolgend (vgl. B. 27^b) findet Kōh., was er B. 26. vorbringt. Nämlich er muß die Sünde da aufsuchen wo sie wächst, im Menschen (Hi. v. 6, 7), und sucht sie an ihrer Quelle (vgl. Sir. xxv. 24) wo sie zugleich am marktesten hervortritt: beim Weibe, das im Orient überhaupt für moralisch schwächer denn der Mann gilt. Also wird dasselbe als Repräsentant der Sünde, als eingefeischte חַיִּי, vorgeführt.

criticisms on Ecclesiastes than any one else. We must add, that the charge frequently preferred against the Germans of indistinctness and confusion of thought often arises from a misunderstanding of their meaning.

Stuart's commentary, with all its defects, is incomparably the best work on Ecclesiastes in the English language. He has endeavoured to give a grammatical analysis of the text, as well as to trace the logical sequence of the context, and has shewn the untenableness of the opinion that Solomon was the author of the book.

1854.—Kitto would neither be moved by the article on Ecclesiastes in his own Cyclopædia, nor take notice of the more elaborate refutation of the Solomonic authorship by Professor Stuart. He looked upon all the arguments advanced against Solomon having written the book as forming "a monument of microscopic ingenuity in criticism,"¹ and as having been satisfactorily disposed of by Mr. Holden and others. As to the design of the book, he tells us that he was formerly inclined to acquiescence in the conclusion that it is an inquiry after the *summum bonum*, THE CHIEF GOOD; but, upon more deliberate consideration, he thinks that *the object of it is, by shewing the emptiness of all things earthly, to force those who follow its general argument to deduce the absolute necessity of a future and better existence, as the only solution of the otherwise inscrutable phenomena which the course of men's life presents.*

1855.—In Germany, however, Biblical criticism has by this time made such progress that there are but few who can muster courage to defend the Solomonic authorship. The only question of dispute with them is whether it is to be assigned to the earlier or latter part of the Persian dominion, or to a post-Persian period. Elster, in his valuable commentary published in 1855, is of opinion that Coheleth lived at the latter end of the unhappy Persian dominion, about three hundred and fifty

¹ Daily Bible Illustrations, &c. By John Kitto, D. D., F. S. A. Job and the Poetical Books. 1854, p. 305.

years before Christ, and that *the design of the book is to exhort the suffering and desponding Israelites to retain their pristine joy in life, the true nature and import of which are to rejoice in good, and to be happy in God.*¹

Elster's commentary, comprising one hundred and thirty-three pages, does honour to the author, and will always afford a source of information and pleasure to every reader.

1856.—The interest which we find now manifested in Ecclesiastes is almost unparalleled. In England, Scotland, America, and Germany, scholars of different grades and of various opinions tried their skill to elucidate it; and we have to notice no less than six several productions in this single year. At home we have a very thorough article of Dr. Samuel Davidson on Coheleth, in "The Text of the Old Testament Considered."² This excellent Hebrew scholar, like the preceding writer, is of opinion that the author of the book lived in the later part of the Persian government, not long after the time of Malachi, *i. e.*, 350–340 B. C., and that *his design is to institute the inquiry after the SUMMUM BONUM.* Though adopting substantially Vaihinger's division of the book, and mode of tracing the gradual development of the sacred writer's thoughts, Dr. Davidson has succeeded in giving to this part of the work all the appearance of originality, by purging it from Vaihinger's hair-splitting speculations about strophes and half-strophes, and by infusing into it some independent thoughts. The following is his analysis:—

The contents are comprehended in four discourses.

DISCOURSE I. (chap. i. 2–ii. 26.)—After proposing the general theme in

¹ Er wendet sich an die einzelnen Individuen, und an diese richtet er seine Mahnung, deren Kern die Lehre bildet: die ursprüngliche, unmittelbare Freude am Leben sich zu bewahren, welche Freude aber ihr wahres Wesen, ihren wahren Inhalt hat in der Freude am Guten, in der Freude in Gott.—Commentar über den Prediger Salomo, von Ernst Elster. Göttingen, 1855, p. 28.

² The Text of the Old Testament Considered; or, The Second Volume of Horne's Introduction to the Bible, by Samuel Davidson, D. D., LL. D. London, 1850, pp. 781–790.

the second and third verses, that all is vanity, Koheleth shews the vanity of theoretical wisdom applied to the investigation of things, and then of practical wisdom directed to the enjoyment of life, arriving at the result, that man by his efforts cannot obtain abiding good.

DISCOURSE II. (chap. iii. 1-v. 19.)—The second discourse begins with a description of the absolute dependence of man on a higher, immutable Providence, succeeded by an answer to the inquiry after the *summum bonum*, that there is no higher good for man than to enjoy himself; but that such good cannot easily be attained amid the many disappointments which are observable on earth. Under these circumstances, however, a man should strive after happiness, through the fear of God and a conscientious fulfilment of duty, trusting in the providence of the Most High, and setting a proper value on earthly possessions, by means of contentedness with the share bestowed by God, and cheerful enjoyment of the benefits received.

DISCOURSE III. (chap. vi. 1-viii. 15.)—In the third discourse the writer sets forth the vanity of striving after riches, develops the true practical wisdom of life, and shews how it is to be gained, notwithstanding all the incongruities of earthly life.

DISCOURSE IV. (chap. viii. 16-xii. 8.)—In the fourth discourse these incongruities are more particularly examined, maxims being laid down, at the same time, for the true enjoyment of life; after which, the whole is summed up in the enunciation of the same sentiment which stands at the beginning, viz., that solid, unchanging happiness is not to be found in earthly things.

1856.—In Scotland there appeared a "New Translation and Exposition of the Book of Ecclesiastes; with Critical Notes on the Hebrew Text. By Benjamin Weiss." This zealous missionary is very wroth with "the torturers of Sacred Writ, who have maintained that (according to their lexicon) they discovered in this book many passportless Chaldaisms, and therefore they have denied its Solomonic authorship." Mr. Weiss meets all the lingual difficulties with the assertion that the rich and wise Solomon knew the post-exile *patois*, and, in corroboration of it, asks these critics, "What language did Solomon employ in courting, or in obtaining his foreign women from their parents?"¹ After this specimen of his mode of arguing, we are not at all surprised to hear Mr. Weiss repeat

¹ New Translation and Exposition of the Book of Ecclesiastes; with critical notes on the Hebrew text. By Benjamin Weiss, missionary to the Jews, &c., &c. Dundee, 1856, p. 10.

the old story, that *this book contains Solomon's penitential dirge and lamentation over his sins.*

1856.—In America, we have this year "The Book of Ecclesiastes explained, by James M. Macdonald, D. D." And though the Doctor pretends to give us "the *results* of criticisms on the Hebrew without the process by which it has been reached," yet, contrary to the results of the best critical investigations, he maintains that Solomon wrote this book, and that "*we undoubtedly have the proof and monument of his repentance in the book of Ecclesiastes.*"¹ It is rather strange that one of Dr. Macdonald's reasons for not intending to prepare a grammatical praxis for students in Hebrew is, that "this has been so ably and fully done by such scholars as Van der Palm, Desvieux, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, &c." Any one, even slightly acquainted with the history of exegesis, knows that Gesenius never wrote a commentary on Ecclesiastes. But the identification of authorship is evidently not among Dr. Macdonald's gifts.

1856.—Dr. Ludwig von Essen is one of the several Germans who commented on Coheleth in 1856. As a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, he is quite enraged with the Protestant heretics for denying the Solomonic authorship of this book, and grieved to find Jahn and Herbst, members of the true Church, infected with this heresy. Von Essen's work, however, is not a regular exposition of Ecclesiastes, but simply a *contribution*² towards it, consisting of four sections:—

Section I. discusses the superscription, and II. the authorship of the book; III. the period of life in which Solomon wrote it, whether before or after his fall; and IV. gives an explanation of the difficult portion of it, viz., chap. iii. 18-22. As to the design of the book, Dr. Von Essen thinks that *Solomon wrote it*

¹ The Book of Ecclesiastes explained. By James M. Macdonald, D. D. New York, 1856, p. 60.

² Der Prediger Salomo's. Ein Beitrag zur Erklärung des alten Testaments. Von Ludwig von Essen, Doctor der Theologie, &c. Schaffhausen, 1856.

after his fall and recovery, and designed it to be a monument of his conversion.¹

1856. — The next German work on Ecclesiastes, issued from the press this year, which we have to notice, is that of Dr. Wangemann. He is the only Protestant commentator in Germany, as far as we know, who has the courage still to maintain that *Solomon was the author of this book, and that it contains the monarch's confession of sin.* He says² —

The book contains the confessions of a richly-gifted and much experienced soul; it is the outflowing of the fulness of a sinful heart, condensing the manifold results of an excited life into one sum. This sum has described its starting point in the first verse, namely, that all things under the sun are vanity; and its terminus in the words, "Fear God, and keep his commandments, for he shall demand an account of this life." Between these two poles the confessions move about in great fulness, with a geniality peculiar to the richly endowed Solomonic spirit which cannot be fathomed by the measures of our intellectual comprehension and scheming.

Wangemann, also, divides the book into two parts, with an introduction and conclusion. The following is his analysis: —

I. INTRODUCTION, i. 1-11.

A. Superscription and table of the principal contents, i. 1-3.

- a. The author stated (1).
- b. The starting point (2).
- c. The theme (3).

B. The starting point established, i. 4-7.

The vanity and fruitlessness of all earthly things.

¹ Unserer Meinung nach hat Salomo das Buch Koheleth nach seinem Falle geschrieben, d. h. mit andern Worten, wir glauben, daß Salomo sich von seinem Falle wieder erholt und sich von seinen Sünden wieder belehrt hat, und daß unser Buch ein Denkmal dieser Belehrung sei. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

² Das Buch enthält Bekenntnisse einer reich begabten und vielerfahrenen Seele, es ist ein Ausfluß aus einem vollen Sündenherzen, welches die mannichfachen Ergebnisse eines bewegten Lebens unter eine Summa zusammenfaßt. Diese Summa hat ihren Ausgangspunct im ersten Verse selbst angegeben, daß nämlich Alles unter der Sonne eitel sei — und ihren Endpunct in dem Worte: Fürchte Gott und halte seine Gebote, denn er wird Rechenschaft fordern von deinem Leben. Zwischen diesen beiden Polen bewegen sich die Bekenntnisse in großer Fülle, mit der einem salomonisch reich begabten Geiste eigenen Genialität, welche sich nicht unter das Maß verstandesmäßiger Begriffe und Schematisirungen befaßen läßt. — Der Prediger Salomons nach Inhalt und Zusammenhang praktisch ausgelegt von Dr. Wangemann. Berlin, 1856, p. 20.

C. The theme established, i. 8-11.

Man's labour in itself is without result.

II. Principal portion of the book, i. 12-xii. 7.

A. Introduction, i. 12-15.

Solomon describes his personal connection with the question mooted.

B. FIRST PART, i. 16-vii. 14.

Observations on the strivings of men under the sun, and description of the relation in which man, as creature, stands to God, his Creator.

1. Solomon's observations from his own life, i. 16-iii. 15.

- a. First attempt — striving after wisdom, i. 16-18.
- b. Second attempt — sensual enjoyment, ii. 1, 2.
- c. Third attempt — all kinds of work, ii. 3-19.

The practical application of the foregoing, ii. 12-19.

d. Fourth attempt — ceasing from work, ii. 20-23.

e. The practical conclusion that follows from this course, ii. 24-26.

f. The theoretical conclusion that Solomon draws from the observations of his life, iii. 1-8.

God fixes time and measure; man's own doings divide themselves in opposites, and in themselves give no satisfaction.

g. Close of the first section, iii. 9-15.

Man's goal is not in time, but in eternity.

2. Solomon's observations in reference to other men, and their dealings with each other, iii. 16-iv. 12.

a. The scene of this intercourse resembles a tribunal, iii. 16-17.

b. Man's foolish thoughts concerning himself, iii. 18-22.

c. The dealings of men with each other, iv. 1-8.

d. The practical conclusion, drawn from the observation of men's intercourse, iv. 9-12.

3. The conclusions at which Solomon arrived, from his observations of his own life, as well as from the dealings of men in general, iv. 13-vii. 14.

a. His own life is a failure, iv. 13-16.

b. Reasons why Solomon fell under such severe chastisement from God, iv. 17-v. 9.

aa. First reason — he did not keep the vows of his youth, iv. 17-v. 8.

bb. Second reason — Solomon's multifarious undertakings involved a complicated administration, and, in consequence, much injustice was brought about in the land, v. 7, 8.

cc. Third reason — Solomon's heart was bent upon money, v. 9.

- c. The want which such empty striving brings with it, v. 10-16.
- d. Conclusion from the foregoing, v. 17-19.
- e. In the ordinary course of the world, also, such empty striving brings no gain, vi. 1-9.
- f. What man should learn from this, vi. 10-12.
- g. The conclusion for practical life from the first section, vii. 1-14.

C. SECOND PART, vii. 15-x. 1.

Observations on the government of God under the sun.

Description of the relation in which man stands, as a sinner, to the holy God.

1. First attempt at a solution, which proceeds from human uprightness, vii. 15-24.
 - a. Merely human uprightness gives no satisfactory solution, vii. 16-18.
 - b. The universality of sin, vii. 19-22.
 - c. The impossibility of finding a solution hence, vii. 23, 24.
2. Second attempt — the investigation of folly, vii. 25-29.
 - a. The adulterous woman as chief cause of folly.
 - b. The root of sin.
3. 'The first solution of the problem, viii. 1-13.
 - a. Obedience to God, the sovereign Lord, viii. 2-8.
 - b. Humble submission to His will, viii. 9-13.
4. The great problem again propounded, viii. 14-ix. 10.
 - a. The government of God is entirely hid from man, viii. 17.
 - b. Man cannot obtain the approbation of God by his own conduct, ix. 1, 2.
 - c. Wherefore the folly of the fool increases, ix. 3.
 - d. And the anticipation of the time after death brings no consolation to the natural man, ix. 4-10.
5. Conclusion from the contemplation of the government of God, ix. 11-x. 1.
 - a. Man is powerless.
 - b. And an unresisting prey to death.
 - c. There is a remedy for the pressure of this truth.
 - d. But this is generally not heeded.

D. The solution of the problem, x. 2-xii. 7.

1. Rules of conduct in regard to this life, x. 2-20.
 - a. Ver. 2, 3; b. 4; c. 5-10; d. 11-15; e. 16-20.
2. Final solution of the problem by the prospect of the future life, xi. 1-xii. 7.

III. CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK, xii. 8-14.

1856. — The last treatise on Ecclesiastes of this year, which we intend to mention, is contained in Dr. Ernst Meier's "History of the Poetical-National Literature of the Hebrews." He submits that Coheleth, — who lived at the beginning of the unhappy Macedonian dominion, when the national feeling of the Jews was dead, and his suffering brethren were tired of existence, — *thoughtfully seeks to elevate himself above the confusion and misery of his time, and for this purpose has written down in this book, not only the result of his observations, but also the whole process by which he arrived at it. The result, however, is the thought that ALL IS VANITY.*¹ In other words, the design of Coheleth is to shew that there is, in reality, no *summum bonum*. He says —

The whole human life and striving appear to Coheleth fruitless and vain; there is, in reality, no true highest good for man. Hence, nothing remains for him but to enjoy life as cheerfully as possible, before joyless death terminates all his misery. Two main thoughts underlie the whole of his observations.

1. The human spirit cannot perceive, either in nature or in the moral world, a rational design and final object of development. Everything moves in a perpetual round; there is nothing abiding in the change of appearances, no satisfactory result, no real good. A righteous moral government of the world is indeed not to be denied, but it is equally certain that man can nowhere perceive it.

2. As man, with all his trouble and skill, can find no absolute object, no truly real good in life, he may at least achieve objects and advantages which have a relative value. The best thing for him, under these circumstances, is not to dive into the inscrutable plan of the Divine government of the world, according to which the righteous frequently suffer, whilst the wicked prosper. On the contrary, since man's life is apparently a prey to chance, we must use wisely time and circumstances, enjoy thankfully the pleasures of the fleeting moment which we can seize, but thereby not relinquish our belief in the Divine government of the world, and in a righteous retribution. These are the main thoughts which the author seeks to carry through, and to prove in various ways.

¹ Der Verfasser selbst hat unstreitig viel erfahren und erlebt. Er sucht denkend sich über die Zerwürfnisse und das Elend der Zeit zu erheben, und hat zu dem Ende nicht bloß das Resultat seiner Betrachtung, sondern auch den ganzen Weg, wie er zu demselben gelangte, in dieser Schrift niedergelegt. Dieß Resultat aber ist der Gedanke, daß Alles eitel sei. — Geschichte der poetischen National-Literatur der Hebräer, von Dr. Ernst Meier. Leipzig, 1856, p. 551.

1857. — After a lapse of nine years, the *Studien und Kritiken* bring us again a very lengthy and elaborate article on Coheleth, this time written by Umbreit. As the purport of the article is to shew the unity of Ecclesiastes, the author has not formally stated his view of the design and object of the book. It is, however, evident, from the two passages which we subjoin in the foot note, that Umbreit thinks the design of Coheleth is to shew the vanity of striving to secure something unchangeable or imperishable, amidst the changeable or perishing nature of all things under the sun; and that the sacred writer therefore recommends it as the best thing for man, under these circumstances, not uselessly to complain, but to enjoy the present with a calm resignation, and to be conscientiously active and trustful in God, whilst looking forward to the development of the future.¹

1858. — Ten years after the appearance of his article on Coheleth in the *Studien und Kritiken*, Vaihinger published the fourth volume of his commentary on the Poetical Books of the Old Testament, containing "the Preacher, and the Song of Songs." As this exposition is based upon the author's view of the design and plan of the book already described, we must refer to page 221, *et seq.*, for this description.

1859. — Hengstenberg maintains that it is quite misleading

¹ Nach vorausgehender Ueberschrift (B. 1) vernehmen wir B. 2-3 den Grundton des Predigers, der seine folgende Rede durchbringt und unter den mannichfaltigsten Bewegungen und Beruhigungen seiner im unmittelbar und vorgehaltenen Streben nach einem Bleibenden im Vergänglichem lebendig erregten Seele immer von neuem durchschlägt; wir haben das Thema und auch das Ergebniss seiner Forschung und seiner philosophisch-poetischen Darlegung. Er stellt die Behauptung an die Spitze, daß Alles ganz eitel und schnell vergänglich sey, und daß es für den Menschen bei aller seiner Mühe, womit er sich abmühet unter der Sonne, nichts Bleibendes gebe. — Indem der Prediger bei der nicht zu verändernden Veränderlichkeit aller Dinge unter der Sonne, wo ein Bleibendes zu erringen, eine vergebliche Mühe und die Klage darüber eine nichtige ist, alle Weisheit des Lebens in die freie, stille Entfugung und eine gewissenhaft thatige, in gottvertrauendem Hinblick auf die entwickelnde Zukunft frommgenügsame Benutzung der Gegenwart zum eigenen und zum Heile Anderer gesetzt, richtet er in ergreifender Erhöhung des Geistes das letzte Wort der Ermahnung [cap. xi., xii.] noch besonders an die Jugend. — Theologische Studien und Kritiken. Jahrgang, 1857, pp. 2, 9. 54.

to represent Coheleth as occupied with any single narrow theme; that the book has no plan, its object being to inculcate various lessons, all of which are designed to make us fear God and live in him; hence the description of the vanity of all that is earthly, since he only knows 'what he has in God, to whom "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" has become a living consciousness.'

Entering more minutely into the contents of the book, Hengstenberg says —

Coheleth appeared under those distressing circumstances of the time (i.e., under the tyranny of the Persians), partly *consoling*, partly *admonishing* and *reproving*, so that "the rebuke of the wise" is perceptible in it (chap. vii. 5). It is not accidental that the author begins with discharging his first mission, and that he does it with special zeal, his object being, above all, to encourage the heart of the people, — which, despite of its great infirmities, was still the people of his heritage, the people amongst whom God dwelled, — to return to their God. Only when this object had been attained could admonition and reproof be effectual. The writer begins his consolatory mission in a way which may appear at first sight somewhat striking. The people complain on all sides that everything is vanity of vanities; that their times are evil compared with the past, and especially with the glorious day of Solomon. But the writer breaks in with the proclamation that human life generally is vanity; that this world is a vale of tears; and that the difference between happy and unhappy times is much less real than it appears to superficial observation (chap. i. 2-11). The cross is borne more easily when we know that it is the universal destiny of man.

It will be remembered that Herzfeld also maintained that the declaration of the vanity of all things was intended as a comfort for the unhappy Israelites, *vide supra*, p. 88.

The great service, however, which Hengstenberg has rendered, consists in the fact that he, though *decidedly orthodox*, is

¹ Ein flüchtiger Blick auf den Inhalt zeigt, daß derselbe viel zu reich ist, um unter ein solches vereinzelttes Thema subsumirt zu werden. Will man einmal ein Thema aufstellen, so muß man es so allgemein fassen wie der Verf. selbst dies thut in E. xii. 13: fürchte Gott. Die Furcht Gottes und das Leben in ihm zu fördern, darauf gehet zuletzt alles in dem Buche hin, dem dient auch die Darlegung der Nichtigkeit alles Irdischen: was er an Gott hat, weiß nur, wenn das: „Eitelkeit der Eitelkeiten und alles Eitelkeit“ zum lebendigen Bewußtseyn geworden ist. — Der Prediger Salomo ausgelegt von E. W. Hengstenberg. Berlin, 1850, pp. 15, 16.

compelled to declare that it is utterly impossible to reconcile the contents of this book with the Solomonic authorship, and that it is undoubtedly a post-exile production.

1859.—Keil, another unquestionably orthodox scholar, also asserts that “the language and import of the book shew that it originated in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah.” His view of the design of the book has already been mentioned, page 224.

1859.—Dr. Buchanan, however, abides by the old opinion, that Solomon wrote this book after Divine grace had raised him from his grievous fall, and that, guided by the Spirit of God, and taught by his own terrible experience, he has therein expounded *the chief good*. It is greatly to be regretted that the Doctor, who is evidently a total stranger to Biblical criticism, should yet dogmatise so offensively upon the subject, and quote those learned men who gave up a pre-conceived notion, as the result of scientific investigation, as an illustration of “*the perversity of the human mind*.” Speaking of the Solomonic authorship of Ecclesiastes,—which, as we have seen, has now been relinquished by such orthodox and learned scholars as Hengstenberg, Keil, Vaihinger, Elster, &c.,—Dr. Buchanan says—

It certainly does seem strange that there should ever have been a question among critics or commentators as to the authorship of this portion of Scripture. Such, however, is the fact. There have been Rabbis and Talmudists among the Jews, and learned men in the Christian Church, who contrived to persuade themselves, and tried to persuade others, that not Solomon, but some one else, must have written this book. The circumstance seems only to prove that there is no point, however plain, about which the perversity of the human mind will not find means to raise a dispute.¹

Nothing but ignorance could have indited the assertion that “there have been Rabbis and Talmudists among the Jews . . .

¹ Sprache und Inhalt verweisen die Entstehung des Buchs in die Zeiten Esra's und Nehemia's. — Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in die Kanonischen und apokryphischen Schriften des Alten Testaments von Karl Friedrich Keil, Zweite Auflage. Frankfurt a. M., 1859, p. 383.

² The Book of Ecclesiastes; its meaning and its lessons, by Robert Buchanan, D. D. London, 1859, p. 12.

who contrived to persuade themselves, and tried to persuade others, that not Solomon, but some one else, must have written this book.” *No Talmudist denied the Solomonic authorship of this book*. And had the Doctor been acquainted with Jewish literature or Biblical criticism, his homilies would have been less dogmatic and more profitable. It is not to be expected that every preacher should have a critical knowledge of the Bible; but we have a right to expect that one who writes to shew the “*meaning*” of a portion of the Scriptures, who passes judgment upon Matthew Henry, that he is “not always *critically* accurate,”¹ and who ostentatiously quotes the Septuagint, the French and modern versions,² should know something about criticism. Let the following specimen suffice to shew how he is “*critically accurate*” :—

Chap. iii. 18. “I said in my heart,” continues Solomon, “concerning the estate of the sons of men,” &c. To remove the difficulty that hangs over this verse, it is only necessary to understand what he thus said in his heart as a prayer. The sons of men, to whose estate he refers, are evidently the worldly, the unspiritual, the carnal, as contradistinguished from those who are the sons or the children of God. In meditating upon their condition, and observing how completely they were engrossed with earthly things, the earnest desire arose within him, that God would shew them to themselves, to see that, living as they did, they were lowering themselves to a level with the beasts that perish.³

1860.—Though the Rev. Charles Bridges also follows the traditional view of this book in his exposition of Ecclesiastes,⁴ yet the gentle spirit which he manifests towards those who entertain different opinions from his own, and the humility he displays in his work, form a striking contrast to the preceding writer, and therefore deprive criticism of its severity. How meekly he concludes the Preface: “He does not presume to have swept away all obscurities from the sky; but possibly a

¹ The Book of Ecclesiastes; its meaning and its lessons, by Robert Buchanan, D. D. London, 1859, p. 42.

² *Ibid.*, p. 111.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 129.

⁴ An Exposition of the Book of Ecclesiastes. By the Rev. Charles Bridges, M. A. London, 1860, pp. ix. xii.

few rays of light may have been cast upon the dark clouds. For instances of failure in interpretation, he would crave forbearance. For success, he would give the glory where alone it is due." No one who knows the writings of the excellent Mr. Bridges, will expect an exposition from his pen in harmony with the present results of Biblical criticism; and those who resort to his commentary for edification will be abundantly satisfied.

1860. — Mr. Plumptre, in his article on Ecclesiastes in Dr. Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, tries to temper the traditional view of this book with some of the results of modern criticism. He maintains that the book professes to be the confession of a man of wide experience, looking back upon his past life, and looking out upon the disorders and calamities which surround him; that the writer is a man who has sinned in giving way to selfishness and sensuality; who has paid the penalty of that sin in satiety and weariness of life; in whom the mood of spirit, over-reflective, indisposed to action, of which Shakspeare has given us in Hamlet, Jaques, Richard II., three distinct examples, has become dominant in its darkest form, but who has, through all this, been under the discipline of a divine education, and has learnt from it the lessons which God meant to teach him; and that the lesson which he has learnt, and which he teaches us, after reproducing the stages through which he has passed, is, that "*to fear God, and to keep his commandments, is the highest good attainable; that the righteous judgment of God will in the end fulfil itself, and set right all the seeming discords of the world.*"¹

Mr. Plumptre tells us that "we may look on the whole book as falling into *five* divisions;" but in his analysis, however, he only gives us *four*, viz.: —

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. chap. i. 2 – ii. 26 | 3. chap. vi. 10 – viii. 15 |
| 2. iii. 1 – vi. 9 | 4. viii. 16 – xii. 8 |

We must therefore conclude that there is an error in printing.

¹ A Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by William Smith, LL. D., London, 1800, article Ecclesiastes.

As to the authorship of the book, though Mr. Plumptre apparently halts between the two opinions, his sympathies seem, however, to be with the anti-Solomonic side.

1860. — The irresistible force of modern criticism, as well as the insurmountableness of its results, may be seen in Mr. Ayre's edition of the second volume of "Horne's Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures." Supplementing Horne, who adopted Mr. Holden's view and division of Ecclesiastes (*vide supra*, p. 198, &c.), Mr. Ayre remarks:¹ —

Perhaps this book will be best understood if we consider it as divided into four different discourses.

DISCOURSE I. (chap. i. 2 – ii. 26) exhibits, in chap. i., the vanity of theoretical wisdom directed to the knowledge of things; and, chap. ii., the nothingness of practical wisdom, which aims at enjoying life; whence the result is, that man, with all his striving, can attain no lasting good.

DISCOURSE II. (chap. iii. 1 – v. 19) — Following the idea thrown out ii. 21–26, it begins with a description (iii. 1–8) of man's entire dependence on a higher, unchangeable Providence; and, in reply to the question of the chief good, shews that there can be no higher (iii. 9–22) than for a man to enjoy himself and do good; which, however (iv.), it is not easy to attain; still, a man must, in the fear of God, and a conscientious fulfilment of duty, seek trustingly and contentedly to use the earthly goods entrusted to him (v.).

DISCOURSE III. (chap. vi. 1 – viii. 15) shews the vanity of grasping at riches (vi.), then describes practical wisdom (vii. 1–22), and indicates the mode of its attainment, in spite of all the incongruities of earthly life (vii. 23 – viii. 15).

DISCOURSE IV. (chap. viii. 16 – xii. 7). — It further discusses these incongruities, and lays down rules for the conduct of a happy life which may please God, and conducts to the conclusion of the whole (xii. 8–14), that God's future judgment will clear up all present mysteries and irregularities.

This is the great object which the book intends to develop, but which is not disclosed till worldly reasonings are shewn to be insufficient. For, after each several discussion, a difficulty still remains, which has again to be taken up, till the reader's view is raised at last to that high judgment seat before which every wrong will be redressed.

¹ An Introduction to the Criticism of the Old Testament, &c. By the Rev. Thomas Hartwell Horne, B.D. Revised and edited by the Rev. John Ayre, M.A. London, 1800, pp. 744, 745.

As to the Solomonic authorship of Ecclesiastes, so far from quoting those who deny it as illustrating "*the perversity of the human mind*," Mr. Ayre says : —

It is not easy to decide upon the authorship ; different minds will arrive at different conclusions. The reasons which have been given make Hengstenberg and Keil, as well as other critics, believe that the book is not from Solomon. If this be conceded, the same proof will shew that the date of its composition must be placed not earlier than the exile. . . . It is fanciful to say that, as the Persian government, probably in its later administration, became oppressive, allusion is made to it ; all that can fairly be supposed is, that the language might place it about the time of Nehemiah or Malachi, to which prophet's book Ewald considers Ecclesiastes to bear a marked resemblance.¹

It will be seen that Mr. Ayre's view of the design, plan, authorship, and date of the book is the same as that of Vaihinger, Keil, and Dr. Davidson, and constituted one of the heresies imputed to the last writer, which helped to call for our author's revised and more orthodox edition of Horne's Introduction. Not that we object to this view ; on the contrary, we hail it as a triumph of enlightened and liberal criticism in England. We are persuaded, that if those who repudiate the results of rational exegesis as "*the perversity of the human mind*," or heretical, were to bestow the labour upon Biblical criticism which every page almost of Mr. Ayre's revised volume indicates, they would manifest less ignorance and more charity.

What lessons of humility and forbearance ought we to learn from the sketch of what has befallen this book, when we see that *the pious* and *the learned*, both among Jews and Christians, have, with equal confidence, advanced the most opposite and contradictory theories about its meaning ! We are positively assured, as we have seen, that the book contains the holy lamentations of Solomon, together with a prophetic vision of the splitting up of the royal house of David, the destruction of the temple, and the captivity ; and we are also told that it is a discussion between a refined sensualist or hot-headed worldling,

¹ An Introduction to the Criticism of the Old Testament, &c., p. 471.

and a sober sage — That Solomon makes known in it his repentance to all the Church, that thereby he might glorify God, and strengthen his brethren, thus imitating his father David in the fifty-first Psalm ; and that he wrote it "when he was irreligious and sceptical, during his amours and idolatry" — That "the Messiah, the true Solomon, who was known by the title, Son of David, addresses this book to the saints ;" and that a profligate, who wanted to disseminate effectually his infamous sentiments, palmed it upon Solomon. It teaches us to despise the world, with all its pleasures, and flee to monasteries ; it shews that sensual gratifications are man's greatest blessings upon earth — It is a philosophic lecture delivered to a literary society upon topics of the greatest moment ; it is a medley of detached and heterogeneous fragments belonging to various authors and different ages — It describes the beautiful order of God's moral government, proving that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord ; it proves that all is disorder and confusion, and that the world is the sport of chance — It is a treatise upon the *summum bonum* ; it is "a chronicle of the lives of the kings of the house of David, from Solomon down to Zedekiah" — Its object is to prove the immortality of the soul ; and to deny a future existence — It is designed to comfort the unhappy Jews in their misfortunes ; it contains the gloomy imaginations of a melancholy misanthrope — It "is intended to open Nathan's speech (1 Chron. xvii.) touching the eternal throne of David ;" it propounds the modern discoveries of anatomy, as well as the Harveian theory of the circulation of the blood — "It foretells what will become of men or angels to eternity (as found rebelliously fixing in their first-creation life and state of vanity, or obediently surrendering it for the second), in eternal life or death ;" it propounds a view of life inclining to fatalism, scepticism, and epicureanism ! What a solemn lesson for the pious and for the learned to abstain from dogmatism, and what an admonition not to urge one's own pious emotions or ingenious conceits as the meaning of the Word of God !

SECTION VI. — AUTHOR, DATE, AND FORM OF THE BOOK.

The title of the book ascribes the words therein contained to *Cohleth*, or *female-gatherer* (*vide supra*, p. 1), *son of David, King in Jerusalem*. In the twelfth verse of the first chapter this enigmatic individual prefaces his autobiography by calling himself by the same name; "I, *Cohleth*," says he, "was King over Israel in Jerusalem." As Solomon was the only son of David who was king over Israel, there can be no doubt that he is meant by the appellation *Cohleth*. This is fully corroborated by the unequivocal allusions made throughout this book to particular circumstances connected with the life of this great monarch. Compare, for instance, *Cohleth* i. 16, &c., with 1 Kings iii. 12; *Cohleth* ii. 4-10, with 1 Kings v. 27-32, vii. 1-8, ix. 17-19, x. 14-29; *Cohleth* vii. 20, with 1 Kings viii. 46; *Cohleth* vii. 28, with 1 Kings xi. 1-8; *Cohleth* xii. 9, with 1 Kings iv. 32.

The question to be determined is, whether Solomon has really said or written down the things contained in this book; or whether some one else put these sentiments into his mouth as peculiarly appropriate to him, in accordance with the well-known form of personated authorship. In other words, Is Solomon the *real author* of this book, or a *simple actor* in it?

If we implicitly submit to the decision of tradition, we must undoubtedly believe that Solomon is the *actual author* of this book; for this is beyond question the unanimous declaration of both the Synagogue and the Church. The remark in the Talmud (*Baba-Bathra*, 15, a) that King Hezekiah and his associates wrote this book, as well as Isaiah, Proverbs, and the Song of Songs,¹ does by no means contradict this traditional

¹ The whole passage is as follows: — מי כתב משה כתב ספרו וישראל בלעם ואיוב דודש — מי כתב ספרו ושמונה פסוקין שבהורה שמואל כתב ספרו ושופטים ורות דוד כתב ספר תהלים על ידי עשרה וקנים על ידי אדם הראשון על ידי מלכי צדק ועל ידי אברהם ועל ידי משה ועל ידי הדין ועל ידי דודות ועל ידי אסף ועל ידי שלש בני קרח ירמיה כתב ספרו וספר מלכי וקנות חוקי וסיעתו כתבו ימשק סימן: ישעיה משי שיר הישר וקהל אנשי כנסת הגדול כתבו קבר' סימן יחזקאל ושנים עשר דיאל ומגילת אסתר עור' כתב ספרו ויהוה של דברי הימים עד לו

opinion, since this simply refers to the *final editorship*. But, if we appeal to the internal evidence of the book itself, we must, with equal certainty, conclude that Solomon is the *personated author* of the sentiments ascribed to him, as will appear from the following considerations: —

A. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE SOLOMONIC AUTHORSHIP.

1. The book itself does not pretend to have been written by Solomon. All the other reputed writings of this great monarch have his name in the inscriptions. The book of Proverbs begins with "The Proverbs of Solomon," so does the Song of Songs, (*i.e.*, which is Solomon's) Psalm lxxii. and lxxvii. And had this book professed to be Solomon's, his name would surely have appeared at least in the superscription.

2. The enigmatic and impersonal name *Cohleth*, a *female-gatherer*, by which Solomon is designated in this book, shews that he is simply introduced in an ideal sense, as the representative of wisdom.

3. The sacred writer himself clearly indicates, in chap. i. 12, that he assumes Solomon as the speaker, for he represents him as belonging to the *past*, making him say, "I was King over Israel in Jerusalem." That the præterite *I was* (הָיִיתִי) shews that, when this was said, Solomon was no longer king, is by no means an invention of modern criticism; it has been acknowledged from time immemorial, and has given rise to the legend

inspired book]. Moses wrote his book, and the section of Balaam (Numb. xxii. - xxiv.), and Job; Joshua wrote his book, and the eight verses of the law (Deut. xxxiv. 5-12); Samuel wrote his book, Judges and Ruth; David wrote the Psalms of the ten elders, viz., Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Jeduthun, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah; Jeremiah wrote his book, Kings and Lamentations; Hezekiah and his associates wrote Isaiah, Proverbs, the Song of Songs, and *Cohleth*, designated יוֹסֵף [from their initials]; the man of the Great Synagogue wrote Ezekiel, the twelve minor Prophets, Daniel, and Ezra, designated by קֶרֶס; Ezra wrote his book, and the genealogies of the Book of Chronicles, down to himself. Nothing can be more plain than that the word *כתב* is here used in the sense of *writing down, writing out, transcribing, &c.*, for final editorship, and has nothing to do with authorship.

that Solomon was dethroned by Ashmodai, king of the demons. Hence the Chaldee paraphrase of this verse¹ —

When King Solomon was sitting upon the throne of his kingdom, his heart became greatly elated with riches, and he transgressed the commandment of the Word of God; and he gathered many horses, and chariots, and riders, and he amassed much gold and silver, and he married wives from foreign nations. Whereupon the anger of the Lord was kindled against him, and he sent to him Ashmodai, the king of the demons, and he drove him from the throne of his kingdom, and took away the ring from his hand, in order that he should roam and wander about in the world, to reprove it; and he went about the provincial towns and cities of the land of Israel, weeping and lamenting, and saying, "I am Coheleth, whose name was formerly called Solomon, who was King over Israel in Jerusalem."

So also Midrash Yalkut, *in loco*; the Talmud, Gittin, 68, b;² and Midrash Maase Bishlomo Hammelech.³ Nothing can be more distinct than Rashi's explanation of the passage: "I was at first," says he, "king over the whole world, then only over Israel, then only over Jerusalem, and at last had only my roaming stick; for it is written, I WAS king in Jerusalem, but AM NOT KING NOW."⁴ Even Hugo of St. Victor could not get over this præterite, and says that it is here used "because Solomon had put off his kingly robes, abdicated his throne, and was now lying in dust and ashes repenting over his sins, and not deeming himself worthy to be king any longer."

Thus we have a long series of ancient witnesses confirming the results of modern criticism, that the præterite, "*I was king* (הָיִיתִי), represents Solomon as *being king no more*." But as history forbids us to adopt their legend to account for this fact,

1. כִּי הָיָה שְׁלֹמֹה מְלֶכֶּה יָחִיב עַל פִּדְיוֹ מִלְּבָנִיתָהּ מִיְּהוֹנָדָב לְבִיָּהּ לְחֹדֶם עַל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו וְעַבְרָה עַל צָרָתָהּ
מִכְרָא דִּי יִבְנֶה סִסְטֵן יִרְחִיב וְיַרְשֵׁן סִימָא וְצִבְרָה נְקִיטָה וְהָבָה לְחֹדֶם וְאַחֲרָיוּ בְּצִמְחֵין נִכְרָאין מִן
דִּי חֲקֹף רִנְנָא דִּי עֲלוּהִי וְשֹׁדֵר לְחֹדֶם אֲשֶׁרְמָא מְלֶכֶה דְּשִׁידִי וְסֹדֵר חֲדָה מִן פִּדְיוֹתָהּ מִלְּבָנִיתָהּ וְנָסַל
נִשְׁפָּטָהּ מִן דִּיהָ בְּנִין דִּיהָ מְסֻלָּל וְגַל בְּעֻלְמָה לְאַחֲרֵיהֶּן וְחֹדֶם מְחֹרַר עַל בְּרֵי פִלְכִי וְכִרְפִּי אֲרַעָא
דִּישְׂרָאֵל בְּכָא וְסֵנן וְאִסְרָא אֲנָא לְהֵלֶּה דְּהָרִי שְׁמִיהָ שְׁלֹמֹה מְחֻקֵּר מִן הַכֹּחַ דְּנָא הָיִיתִי מְלֶכֶה עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל
בִּירוּשָׁלַם

¹ Vide supra, p. 35.

² Jellinek, Baith Hammidrash, ii., p. 86, *et seq.*

³ הָיִיתִי מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם וְלִבְסוֹף עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלִבְסוֹף עַל יְרוּשָׁלַם לְבָדָה וְלִבְסוֹף אֶל מְקוֹל שְׁהִר נִאֲמָר
הָיִיתִי מֶלֶךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם אֲנִי אֲבִישִׁי מִיְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ

we have here most undeniable proof that the sacred writer describes Solomon as belonging to *the past*, and that he has assumed this great monarch as the speaker.

4. Various statements are made by Coheleth which are most incongruous, and are utterly irreconcilable with any other supposition than that Solomon is the assumed speaker.

a. In chap. i. 16 Coheleth says, "I have acquired far greater wisdom than any (king) who was before me in Jerusalem;" so also, in ii. 7, "I bought me men-servants and maid-servants, and had house-born servants; I had also many herds of oxen and sheep, above all (the kings) who were before me in Jerusalem." That Coheleth is here comparing himself with *kings* is evident from the nature of the case, as the comparison with individuals of a different rank to himself would fail to establish the point of greatness in question. Besides, the adjuncts בִּירוּשָׁלַם and עַל יְרוּשָׁלַם which are used with regard to both, and describe *the place of Coheleth's dominion* (i. 1. 12. 16; ii. 7. 9), shew, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that they also denote *the place of the sovereignty* of those with whom Coheleth compares himself. As Solomon, however, was only the second king over Israel, he could not therefore refer to a long succession of kings, and thus shews that he was assumed as the speaker at a very late period of the Jewish history. Hengstenberg, who admits that ii. 7 precludes the interpretations which take the comparison to consist between Solomon and non-royal personages, submits that, as Jerusalem was the seat of an ancient monarchy, which is evident from the fact that a noble member of it went forth to meet the patriarch Abraham, Solomon could therefore with propriety compare himself with the sovereigns who preceded him. But this explanation is simply gratuitous, as the Jewish history does not mention any line of kings who reigned *in Jerusalem*. The incidental and solitary mention of Melchizedek, king of *Salem*, is too mysterious and circumscribed to justify the comparison with a succession of kings in Jerusalem.

b. The addition *in Jerusalem* (i. 1. 12), which occurs in no

other of the reputed writings of Solomon, shews that the book was written at a time when there was another kingship, the seat of which was *out* of Jerusalem, as this distinction became necessary only after the kingdom was divided into two, and when there was a royal residence in Samaria as well as in Jerusalem. The force of this argument may be seen from the feeble way in which it is opposed. "The addition, *in Jerusalem*," says Hengstenberg, "is to remind us that Coheleth gathered his experience in the very place whose complainings and sighings gave rise to the writing of this book." But have not all or most of the sacred writings been called forth by more immediate local circumstances? Why, then, does not some such reminder accompany the inscription of any other book?

c. Solomon speaks of his own wisdom, riches, and greatness as unparalleled (i. 16; ii. 7. 9). This is incompatible with modest wisdom and true greatness, and can only be accounted for on the supposition that the assumed Solomon is made to say it.

d. Coheleth declares, in ii. 18. 19, that he detested all his estates which he had toiled to acquire, because he must bequeath them to an utter stranger, who for aught he knows may foolishly waste all. Now, as this most unquestionably implies that he had no children of his own to inherit his possessions, it could not have been uttered by Solomon, who had an heir-apparent eagerly waiting to succeed him.

e. Coheleth recommends *individuals* patiently to submit to the decrees of the king, even when he abuses his authority, since the tyrant is sure to provoke the anger of *the mass* of his subjects, when condign punishment will inevitably be inflicted upon him by his people (viii. 2-9). The doctrine of such a relation of monarchs and their subjects could never have been propounded by Solomon, or by any other oriental sovereign, and we question whether we could even find a European monarch of the present enlightened age to endorse this view. Those who explain the whole passage as referring to God, and to the absolute obedience

which creatures owe to the Creator, who is the King, are guilty of strange inconsistencies, as will be seen in the commentary.

f. The description given of a royal spendthrift, and of the misery which he inflicts upon his land (x. 16-19), could not proceed from the mouth of a king, and especially not from Solomon, who was himself a spendthrift, unless he intended to write a satire upon himself.

g. The state of violence and misery depicted with so much bitterness in this book — on the supposition that it could be made to harmonise with the reign of Solomon — must have been brought about by this monarch's own extravagances and sins. Is it possible that the author of these evils would speak of them in such terms? Mr. Plumptre meets this question by submitting that "there are forms of satiety and self-reproach of which this half-sad, half-scornful retrospect of a man's own life — this utterance of bitter words, by which he is condemned out of his own mouth — is the most natural expression."¹ But we submit that it is impossible to shape the case in question into one of those forms. Here is a man, who has publicly abused God's mercies, who has violated God's law, abandoned himself to revelry with his harem of foreign and idolatrous women, for whose idols he at last built temples, and thereby caused others to be guilty of injustice and violence; and yet all the confession he has to make before God and man is not to acknowledge his own crimes, and humble himself in dust and ashes, but simply *to complain of those whom he had made to sin*. The different things which Coheleth tells us he has tried in his lifetime, he does not in the slightest degree characterise as sinful, but simply as philosophic experiments which have failed to yield the contemplated result. And if this can be construed into an acceptable form of confession of sins and crimes, our notions of the holiness and justice of God and the moral laws of society must be radically wrong. No religious community in our days would accept such a document from an offender, as the proper expression of sin

¹ Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, art. Ecclesiastes, p. 474.

committed against God, and against its laws; and if we are in doubt as to what the Jews of old regarded as the proper "retrospect of a man's own life," laden with perhaps less guilt than that of Solomon, and what they deemed to be "the most natural expression" of such a retrospect, let us read the prayer of Daniel, and the prayer of Solomon himself at the dedication of the Temple, let us peruse the Penitential Psalms, but especially let us compare the fifty-first Psalm with the contents of "The Words of Coheleth," and we shall know whether the last can pass as such. We therefore submit that, supposing the description of the state of violence and misery given in this book could be made to harmonise with the days of Solomon, the bitter complaints of Solomon about others who simply acted a secondary part in bringing about this miserable state of things, without the slightest reference to himself, whose guilty conduct was the chief cause of it, would alone preclude the Solomonic authorship of the book.

5. But we submit that the state of oppression, violence, and misery depicted in this book cannot be reconciled with the reign of Solomon, and is therefore against the Solomonic authorship of it. Palestine, the inheritance of the Lord, was then groaning under the oppression of satraps, and presented such a scene of injustice and violence, that death was thought preferable to life, and not to have been born at all was deemed still better (iv. 1-4; v. 7); Asiatic despotism, which permits no will to its subjects, was rampant (viii. 1-4), filling "the holy places" with wicked officials (viii. 10), suddenly raising servants to posts of honour, and hurling the great from their lofty positions (x. 5-7); this tyranny, with its numerous spies, had penetrated into the privacy of families to such a fearful extent, that it actually became dangerous to give utterance to one's thoughts even in the secrecy of home (x. 20); wickedness and crime were perpetrated with perfect impunity, so much so, that people were thereby encouraged to commit heinous sins, and were led to deny the moral government of God (viii. 10, 11), and to neglect their duties

to the Creator (v. 1-5). The utter impossibility of attempting to reconcile this state of things with the age of Solomon is so manifest, that even Hengstenberg, after giving a summary of those sufferings, according to his analysis of the contents, affirms that, *this being the external and internal condition of God's people, the idea cannot for a moment be entertained that the book belongs to the time of Solomon, and that he was the author of it.*¹

When Mr. Ayre declares, upon his own authority, that the argument derived from "the description of manners, and the complaints of oppression, misgovernment," &c., against the Solomonic authorship of this book "is of little weight," we have nothing to say; but when he adds that "Hengstenberg very properly rejects objections of this kind,"² evidently referring to his remark fifteen years ago in Kitto's Cyclopædia,³ we question whether he has taken Hengstenberg's words in their legitimate sense; and maintain, that if he had been acquainted with Hengstenberg's commentary on Ecclesiastes, he would not have made such an assertion; for, besides the passage already quoted, Hengstenberg distinctly says that *the description given in the book of the oppression, misgovernment, &c., of God's people, fits solely and exclusively the Persian dominion.*⁴

6. The fact that Solomon is represented as labouring to acquire wisdom, possessions, and renown, and as prosecuting his search after sensual enjoyments, *in order to ascertain what is good for the children of men* (ii. 3-9; iii. 12, 22, &c.), thus making philosophical experiments to discover *the summum bonum*, and to solve the problems of life, is both incompatible

¹ Sind nun das die äußeren und die inneren Zustände des Volkes Gottes, so wird nicht daran gedacht werden können, daß das Buch aus Salomos Zeit und von ihm verfaßt sey. Der Prediger Salomo, p. 6.

² An Introduction to the Criticism of the Old Testament, &c., p. 740.

³ A Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature, art. Ecclesiastes, pp. 594, 595.

⁴ Die dargelegten Züge nun passen einzig und allein auf die Zeit der Persischen Herrschaft über das Volk Gottes. . . . Wie die äußeren, so passen auch die inneren Zustände des Volkes, wie sie sich in unseren Buche darstellen, auf die Zeit der Persischen Herrschaft. *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 6.

with the conduct of the historical Solomon, and is an idea of a much later period than the age of this great monarch. It was evidently introduced into Palestine by those Jews who bestowed "much study" upon the "many books" (xii. 12) of the Greek philosophers, and the speculations to which it gave rise, as recorded in this book, contain the incipient forms of Pharisaism and Sadduceeism.

7. The reference to a future bar of judgment, when all the present irregularities in the moral government of God shall be rectified by the Judge of the quick and the dead, whereby Coheleth solves the grand problem of this book, shews, beyond all doubt, that Solomon could not have been the author of it, and that it must be a *post-exile production*.

With those who believe that the blessed Trinity is revealed in the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis; that the doctrine of justification by faith, the atonement, and all the other cardinal truths of Christianity, are set forth in the chapters immediately following, we do not intend to argue. We appeal to those whom a rational and reverential study of Holy Writ, and a due regard to the laws of language, have taught that God, who causes the natural light at first to break feebly upon our eyes, and to increase gradually in splendour till it attains to its meridian glory, also caused the light of the Sun of Righteousness, at first beaming faintly, to shine more and more unto the perfect day, and we ask if *such an explicit declaration* about the return of the soul to God, who shall hereafter judge not only every action but every secret of man, whether it be good or evil, can be assigned to the early dawn of Revelation? Let the dim intimations respecting a future state, given under the types and figures prior to the exile (Gen. i. 27, v. 24, xxxvii. 35, xlix. 33; Deut. xviii. 10, 11; 1 Sam. xi. 6, xxviii. 7, &c.; Isa. viii. 19; xxvi. 18, 19, xxix. 4; Ezek. xxxvii. 1-4), be compared with the naked truth, as declared after the exile by Daniel (xii. 2, 3) in the Book of Wisdom (ii. 23, &c.; vi. 18, 19), Tobit (ii. 17), 2 Macabees (vii. 9. 36), and especially in

the New Testament; and we submit that the gradual development of this doctrine will be fully recognised; and hence it will also be conceded, that the distinct reference of Coheleth to a future judgment, precludes the idea of the Solomonic authorship of the book.

8. The strongest argument, however, against the Solomonic authorship of this book, is its vitiated language and style. We do not allude so much to the numerous Aramaic expressions, which have no parallel in any other portion of Scripture of equal size, and which would of itself be sufficient to shew that it is the last written work in the canon of the Old Testament, but we refer to the whole complexion of it. We could as easily believe that Chaucer is the author of Rasselas, as that Solomon wrote Coheleth.

B. — ARGUMENTS FOR THE SOLOMONIC AUTHORSHIP EXAMINED.

1. It is asserted that the book itself ascribes the words therein contained to Solomon, that it represents him as narrating his personal experience (I gave my heart to so and so; I did so and so; I saw; I concluded, &c.), and that to depart from the literal meaning of these statements is to call in question the truth of Scripture. But, as Mr. Plumptre rightly remarks, "this hypothesis, that every such statement in a canonical book must be received as literally true, is, in fact, an assumption that inspired writers were debarred from forms of composition which were open, without blame, to others. In the literature of every other nation, the form of personated authorship, where there is no *animus decipiendi*, has been recognised as a legitimate channel for the expression of opinion, or the quasi-dramatic representation of character. Why should we venture on the assertion that, if adopted by the writers of the Old Testament, it would have made them guilty of falsehood, and been inconsistent with their inspiration?"¹ Other figures of speech, *involving the same principle*, are used both in the Old and New Testaments. Our

¹ Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, art. Ecclesiastes, p. 474.

Saviour, in his description of the poor and the rich man, not only gives the former a name, but puts statements into the mouth of the latter and of Abraham (the man *cried and said*: Father Abraham, and Abraham *said*: Son, remember, &c.), and is it urged, that to depart from the literal meaning here is to call in question the truth of Scripture? If it be admitted that the sacred writers used one figure of speech whereby they made people say things which in reality they did not say, there can be no difficulty in their using another figure which involved the same thing. No one ever thought that Plato, Cicero, &c., violated truth because they used it, and it never enters our minds to characterise the Book of Wisdom as an imposition, for personating Solomon. It is therefore unreasonable to urge that as an insurmountable difficulty here, which forms no difficulty at all elsewhere.

2. It is urged that the book has been handed down as Solomon's by the concurrent voice of tradition, and that it would be both "dangerous and irreligious to desert this combined testimony." But we submit that whatever may be the authority of tradition on other points, it has certainly no power to determine points of criticism, and that this is practically acknowledged by all modern expositors, as may be seen in every page of their works. Tradition has handed down the Book of Wisdom as the inspired work of Solomon. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Athanasius, Cyril, Epiphanius, Eusebius, Augustine, Isidore, &c., quote it as such. "To the testimony of those few among the ancients," says Calmet, "who have disputed its authority, we oppose a crowd of witnesses, in all ages of the Church, who have acknowledged and quoted it as divine Scripture. In short, to the scruples of those who, seeing antiquity wavering upon this point, have found some difficulty to persuade themselves to admit this book into the canon, we oppose the third council of Carthage, in 397; that of Sardica, in 347; that of Constantinople, in Trullo, in 692; the eleventh of Toledo, in

¹ See vol. ii. of Horne's Introduction, Davidson's ed., pp. 1323, 1324.

675; that of Florence, in 1438; and, lastly, the fourth session of the council of Trent, all of which expressly admitted this book into the class of holy scripture. And there is scarce any ancient father who has not quoted and commended it. Many of them attribute it to Solomon, others to some prophet, and all to an inspired writer."¹ Tradition has treated the parable of Dives and Lazarus as a real narrative, yet the most pious and learned Protestants deny the canonicity of the Book of Wisdom, and reject the interpretation of the passage in Luke, without regarding it as "dangerous and irreligious to desert this combined testimony." If we are at liberty to use our judgment in one case in defiance of tradition, surely we cannot be denounced for using it in another.

As the *date* of the book must be determined by internal evidence, it cannot be expected that it will ever be definitely settled. The Rabbinical Hebrew, in which it is written, leaves no doubt in our mind that it must have originated at least in the latter end of the Persian government (350–340 B. C.); and if it could be shewn that the Old Testament canon was not closed till after that time, the language and complexion of the book would fully justify us in assigning it to a much later period.

The *form* of the book is poetico-didactic, without the beautiful parallelisms and rhythm of the poetry written in the golden age of the Hebrew language. Even the grandest portion of the book (xi. 1–7), where the sacred writer rises infinitely above his regular level, is devoid of those charms which imparted such life and fascination to the older Hebrew poetry. The gnomes and maxims with which it abounds, and which have caused some erroneously to assign to it a *gnomological* character, are simply introduced to illustrate certain points in question, and only show that when the book was written, the proverbial sayings of the Solomonic age had already become household words, and were largely introduced in discussing the affairs of life.

¹ Preface to the Book of Wisdom, given in Patrick, Lowth, Arnald, Whitby, and Lowman's Commentary.

SECTION VII. — EXEGETICAL HELPS.

ANCIENT VERSIONS.

1. The Septuagint, } in Stier's and Theile's Polyglot.
2. The Vulgate, }
3. St. Jerome, Translation and Comment., Opp. Tom. ii.
4. The Syriac, in Walton's Polyglot and Bible Society's ed.
5. The Chaldee Paraphrase, in Bomberg's and Buxtorf's Rabbinic Bible.

JEWISH COMMENTATORS.

6. Rashi, in the Rabbinic Bible.
7. Rashbam, edited by Jellinek.
8. Ibn Ezra, in the Rabbinic Bible.
9. Mendelssohn, translated by Mr. Preston.
10. Herzfeld, *תנ"ך מפורש* und ausgelegt.
11. Cahen, *La Bible*. Tom. xvi.
12. Philippson, *Die Israelitische Bibel*, Dritter Theil.

CHRISTIAN COMMENTATORS.

13. Pineda, Comment. in Ecclesiasten.
14. Mercer, Comment. in Jobum, et Solomonis Proverbia, Ecclesiasten, &c.
15. Grotius, Opp. Tom. i.
16. Reynolds, Annotation on the Book of Ecclesiastes.
17. Le Clerc, Comment. in Vet. Test. Tom. iii.
18. Desvoeux, Philological and Critical Essay on Ecclesiastes.
19. Hodgson, Ecclesiastes, a new Translation.
20. Holden, An Attempt to illustrate the Book of Ecclesiastes.
21. Rosenmüller, Scholia in Vet. Test. P. ix, vol. ii.
22. Knobel, Commentar über das Buch Koheleth.
23. Ewald, *Sprüche Salomo's Koheleth*.
24. Noyes, A new Translation of the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, &c.
25. Hitzig, *Der Prediger Salomo*.
26. Heiligstedt, in Maure's Comment. Vol. iv., sect. 11.
27. Stuart, A Commentary on Ecclesiastes.
28. Eiser, Commentar über den Prediger.
29. Baehinger, *Der Prediger und das Hohelied*.
30. Feghtenberg, *Der Prediger Salomo*, translated into English by D. W. Simon, in Clark's Foreign Theological Library.

For particulars about the dates and places of these commentaries, see the Historical Sketch.

THE
WORDS OF COHELETH,
SON OF DAVID, KING IN JERUSALEM.

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PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER I. 2-11.

Cohelah declares that all human efforts are utterly vain (2). Man has no advantage from all his labour (3); he must speedily quit this life, whilst the earth abides for ever (4). The objects of nature depart and retrace their course again, but man vanishes and is for ever forgotten (5-11).

2 Vanity of vanities, saith Cohelah, vanity of vanities, all is

1. *The words of Cohelah, &c.* For the explanation of this verse, see Introduction, sec. i.

2. *Vanity of vanities, &c.* Deeply impressed with the brevity of man's life, and with the conviction that no human effort can protract man's existence here, Cohelah denounces, in the most intense language imaginable, all undue exertions to satisfy the cravings of the soul. הָבִיל (from הָבֵל, *to steam, to exhale, to breathe*), prop. *steam, vapour, breath*; hence, tropically, that which is unsubstantial and evaporates, *nothingness, vanity*, is the construct of הָבִיל, like נֶרֶךְ of נָרַךְ, and חֵדֶר of חָדַר, comp. Ewald, Gram. § 213, a; Fürst, Lex. s. v. The construction of the same noun in the genitive expresses the

superlative degree, *vanity of vanities*, i. e., *utter or absolute vanity*, comp. עֲבָדִי עֲבָדִים, *servant of servants*, i. e., *most abject servant* (Gen. ix. 25; Numb. iii. 32; Song of Songs i. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 15; Gesen. § 119, 2; Ewald, § 313 c.) The repetition of the same phrase, *vanity of vanities*, a second time, gives the highest intensity to the statement; comp. הָבִילוּ הַמַּיִם קוֹלָם הָיָה קוֹלָם הָיָה קוֹלָם, *the floods have lifted up, O Eternal! the floods have lifted up their voice* (Ps. xciii. 3; cxv. 1). הָבִיל here is not to be taken as synonymous with the Greek ὁ κόσμος, *the universe*, (Geier, Rosenmüller, &c.), which contradicts the sequel (iii. 11-14), and is contrary to the context, where the well-regulated and permanent laws of

the eye could never be satisfied with seeing, and the ear
9 could never be filled with hearing all. What hath been still is,

prominent instances of nature, the permanency and uniformity of their existence and operations, contrasted with the transitoriness and instability of man, the sacred writer exclaims, that all human language is too feeble to enumerate all the objects in nature which possess the same properties, and might be adduced in illustration of his proposition — objects so numerous that the eye could never see, nor the ear hear of, them all. As עֵינַי in Hebrew, like the corresponding expressions in

other languages (comp. ܐܝܢܐ in Syriac, ܥܝܢܐ in Chaldee, from ܥܝܢܐ, to speak, ἔγωγε in Greek, from ἔγω, to speak, whence also *res* in Latin, *Sache* in German, from *sagen*) is derived from a verb signifying to speak (עָרַב), and, like its equivalents in other languages, denotes both a word, as uttered by the living voice, and a thing which a word is used to express; hence עֵינַי has here been rendered by some words, and by others things. The word עֵינַי, too, has been variously explained, as some took it in its passive signification, and others have assigned to it an active meaning. Thus the Vulg. has *omnes res difficiles*, all things are hard, which Luther (*es ist alles Thun so voll Mühe daß*, &c.) and Coverdale (*all things are so hard*, &c.) follow. Desvoeux has, *all these considerations are tiresome*; Hodgson and Boothroyd have, *all things thus at their task*. But, against these renderings is to be urged, that though עֵינַי undoubtedly means also a thing, yet the context requires that it should be taken here in its primary sense, viz., a word, as is evident from the verb עָרַב, with which it is connected, thus forming the well-known construction עֵינַי עָרַב, (*vide infra*, vii. 21). As for עֵינַי, it is invariably used in a passive sense (comp. Deut. xxv. 18; 2 Sam. xii. 2), and can therefore

form no exception here. Moreover, the rendering we advocate is the one most compatible with the scope of the passage, as will be seen from the remarks upon the next clause.

The eye could never be satisfied, &c. The objects which might be adduced in illustration of this proposition are so numerous that the eye could never see them all, nor the ear hear all. As the eye is not only the inlet of thought, but is also the outlet of feelings and emotions, those inward conditions and actions are ascribed to it which it manifests. Thus, because it expresses the hoping of the soul, the eye is represented as hoping; comp. עֵינַי לִי אֵלֶיךָ יִשְׁכְּנוּ, THE EYES OF ALL HOPE TO THEE (Ps. cxlv. 15); hence, also, the phrase עֵינַי יִשְׁכְּנוּ, the desire of the eyes (1 Kings xx. 6); *ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν* (1 John ii. 16), and the insatiableness of the eye in the text before us (comp. also *infra*, ii. 10; iv. 8; Prov. xxvii. 20). Reynolds, Gill, Holden, &c., explain the meaning of this clause, "the pleasure of these senses is so blunted by the same objects constantly presented, that they are pricked with further desire of new objects of delight." But this evidently arose from their mistaking the sense of the first clause. The sacred writer, having described the stability and regularity of several objects of nature, affirms, in this verse, that these are by no means all; that the objects which possess the same properties are too numerous to be described; and that the curious eye, which wishes to see them all, and the inquisitive ear that desires to hear all, could never be gratified, for the telling of them would require more words than man possesses; the human eye and ear, whose functions are of short duration, determined to compass all, would cease to exist long before all is told, and hence could never be satisfied.

9. What hath been, &c. The in-

and what hath been done is still done, and there is nothing
10 new under the sun. If there be anything of which it is said, Behold this is new! it hath been long ago, in

ference is here drawn from the statement made in the preceding verse. In all those objects of nature, therefore, we see that that which has existed continues to exist, and the motions which these existing objects have made they make again; the earth, which has existed, still exists; the sun is still the same, and runs the same race; the wind is still the same, and returns to its well-known course; the streams are still the same, and flow in the same manner into the mighty ocean: it is the same with numberless objects of nature — their existence is permanent, their course regular and uniform, and there is no deviation. עֵינַי הָיָה is rendered by the Sept. interrogatively, τί τὸ γεγεῖνός; τί τὸ παρῳκῆναι; Vulg. *quid est quod fuit?* which is followed by the Arabic, Luther, Grotius, Holden, Boothroyd, &c.; but this is contrary to the usage of the combination עֵינַי הָיָה in this book (comp. *infra*, iii. 15; vi. 10; vii. 24; viii. 7; x. 14; where it signifies *id quod*, and where even the Sept., with the exception of vii. 24, and the Vulg., translate it so). As in other languages, both interrogatives *who*, for persons, and *what*, for things, are used in Hebrew for indefinite pronouns, *whosoever*, *whatsoever*, with the relative pronoun either expressed or implied (*infra*, v. 9; ix. 4; Exod. xxiv. 14; Prov. ix. 4; Numb. xxiii. 3; 1 Sam. xx. 4; Gen. § 37, 2; Ewald, § 331, b; § 357, c), so that עֵינַי הָיָה exactly corresponds to עֵינַי הָיָה in Exod. xxxii. 33; 2 Sam. xx. 11. The verb הָיָה, to be, refers to the permanent existence of the objects of nature, and עָרַב, to do, to their uniform and regular operations. The imperfect expresses the permanent state, *it is now and ever shall be* (Gen. xliii. 32; Prov. xv. 20; Gen. § 127, 2; Ewald, § 136, b). עֵינַי

nothing (Numb. xi. 6; Judg. xiii. 4; 2 Sam. xii. 13; 2 Kings iv. 2; Prov. xiii. 7), corresponding to the Greek *οὐ πᾶς* (Luke i. 37; Rev. xxi. 17; Gesen. § 152, 1; Ewald, § 323, b).

10. *If there be anything, &c.* Having affirmed that no innovation occurs in the objects of nature, the sacred writer states how, if anything should seem new in the operations of nature, it is to be accounted for; it is merely owing to the individual who happens not to be acquainted with the phenomenon which had taken place in bygone years. The particle *if*, is implied before *there is*; comp. Judg. xi. 36; Prov. xxiv. 10; Song of Songs, viii. 1; Ewald, § 357, b. עֵינַי, a word also a thing, *vide supra*, verse 8. עֵינַי in עֵינַי הָיָה is not the nominative, making it a *prospectiva* (Desv. p. 310), a thing crying out to the beholder. See this is new, but is the accusative; and עֵינַי, the third person, as frequently elsewhere, is used for the impersonal or passive; compare exactly the same phrase *עֵינַי הָיָה אֲחֵרֵי יָמֵינוּ*, for anything lost of which, or respecting which, it is said that it is this, i.e., עֵינַי הָיָה, miserably rendered in the Auth. Ver. (Exod. xxii. 8); and see also *infra*, vii. 21; ix. 15; xii. 1. 5; Gen. xi. 9; 1 Sam. xix. 22; Gesen. § 137, 3; Ewald, § 282, 2. The Sept. renders the words עֵינַי הָיָה, *εἰ ἂν λέγοι καὶ ἐπὶ*, whatsoever speaks and says, so also the Syriac *ܐܝܢܐ ܕܝܡܐ*, as if the Hebrew were

ܐܝܢܐ ܕܝܡܐ; the Vulg., again, has *NEC VALET QUISQUAM DECERE*, nor is any man able to say, as if the Hebrew were *עֵינַי אֵינִי*; but we are prepared for such deviations from the Hebrew text, by the frequent blunders which we meet in those versions. The expression עֵינַי, from

11 the time of old, which was before us. But there is no

בָּרָא, to plait, to bind, or tie strongly together, hence to be strong, great, long, is used adverbially for long ago, already, formerly; בָּרָא, by which the Sept. renders it, and jam of the Vulg., are not exact equivalents, inasmuch as these refer to both time past and present, which has caused the translators of our Authorised Version and some commentators to ascribe the same signification to the Hebrew expression (*vide infra*, ii. 16), whereas בָּרָא is invariably used with reference to time past; it only occurs in this book (ii. 12, 16; iii. 15; iv. 2; vi. 10; ix. 6, 7), but is of frequent occurrence in later Hebrew writings. עוֹלָמִים, the plur., is often used for the ages of antiquity, the time that is past (Is. li. 9), and the ה before it expresses the time when, in, within which anything happens (Gen. vii. 4; Ps. xxx. 6; Ezra x. 8; Gesen. § 164, 3, e; Ewald, § 217, d). The words מִשְׁכָּנֵי הָאֵלֹהִים have occasioned some difficulty, owing to the verb הָאֵלֹהִים, which is singular, and refers to עוֹלָמִים, plural. Symmachus has αἰῶνες αἰῶν, both in the singular; several of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. have מִשְׁכָּנֵי הָאֵלֹהִים both in the plural; so also the Chaldee, which were before. Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, &c., try to account for the anomaly in the text, by regarding הָאֵלֹהִים as being used in a kind of impersonal way (compare Ewald, § 295, d). There is, however, no necessity for any of those alterations proposed by the ancient versions, or for the artificial explanation given by the modern commentators alluded to. The Hebrews, like other people, were not always very particular about making a verb, adjective, or pronoun agree with its subject in gender or number, especially in colloquial language; we have undeniable proof of this in chap. ix. 6; x. 15, 17; Jer. xlviii. 16; Dan ix. 24; Zech. xi. 5; Gesen. § 121, 6, Rem. 1; § 137, 1; Ewald, § 184, c. Hodgson's mode of eluding this

anomaly, by rendering the clause, the same, which is now presented to us, happened ages ago; or the similar one of Ewald, schon war vorlängst, was geschähe vor unsern Augen, making it the subject of the sentence, which is followed by Heiligstedt, only increases the difficulty, by palming upon the words a very harsh and unnatural construction. Had the sacred writer intended to say what this rendering makes out, the original would have been הָאֵלֹהִים מִשְׁכָּנֵי הָאֵלֹהִים I am therefore not a little surprised to see Philippon defend this forced construction.

11 But there is no remembrance, &c. Having shewn the permanent existence and uniform return of the objects of nature to the respective places from which they apparently vanished, as illustrated by the permanently abiding earth, the pantingly disappearing yet gloriously rising sun, the seemingly scattered but regularly returning wind, the engulfed and yet emerging streams, the sacred writer now contrasts these with the departing but never-returning and ever forgotten man, and thus establishes his proposition, that all human efforts to divert it are utter vanity, since "man has no advantage from all the toil wherewith he toiled under the sun." This verse, which contains the reason for the statement made in ver. 2-4, has been greatly misunderstood, through the rendering of מִשְׁכָּנֵי הָאֵלֹהִים by former things, and things that are to come; and by the affirmation that it accounts for the mistake that some commit in supposing certain things to be new which have merely been forgotten. A careful examination of the text and scope of the passage will, however, shew the incorrectness of this interpretation. The burden of the sacred writer—after having affirmed that all human effort is vain, as man's existence and activity here must for ever cease (ver. 2-4)—is to prove his position, which he

remembrance of former men, nor will there be any remembrance of future men among those who will live hereafter.

does by adducing, in the second clause of verse 4 and verses 5-10, instances of stability in objects of nature, and contrasting them with the instability of man. Then to take this verse (11) "as assigning a reason why some err in supposing that something new takes place," is to miss the whole force of the argument. It was to be expected, that after the inspired writer had enumerated his illustrations, he would recur to his main proposition, "the vanishing of man from this scene of action," which he does in our rendering. This is, moreover, corroborated both by the similar sentiment in ii. 16, 17; ix. 5, which is the burden of the sacred writer, and by the fact that the words מִשְׁכָּנֵי הָאֵלֹהִים and מִשְׁכָּנֵי הָאֵלֹהִים being masculine forms, are universally used for men (comp. Deut. xix. 14; Job xviii. 20; and *infra*, iv. 16), and never for things, which are expressed by the feminine (comp. ראשונה, Isa. xlii. 9;

xlvi. 9; xlviii. 3, &c.; Gesen. § 107, 3, b). The Chaldee has therefore rightly rendered it לֹא זָכָרָא לְקִדְמָאִין וְלֹא יִזְכָּרָא לְאַחֲרָא, there is no remembrance of the former generation; thus also Rashbam explains בני אדם שֶׁנִּבְרָאוּ לִפְנֵינוּ by בעולם, the sons of men that were born before us in the world, and מִשְׁכָּנֵי הָאֵלֹהִים by שֶׁיָּבֹאוּ אַחֲרֵינוּ בעולם, those men that will come after us in the world; R. Bechai, Chobath Halvavoth; Alsbech, &c. Knobel, Heiligstedt, Elster, &c., have also seen the inconsistency of rendering מִשְׁכָּנֵי הָאֵלֹהִים by former and future things, though they missed the sense of the passage. וְזָכָר is the construct of זָכָר, ז. q., *vide infra*, ix. 5 (comp. Gesen. § 93, 3; Ewald, § 214, a), and, as is frequently the case, precedes a preposition (comp. Isa. lvi. 10; Ps. lviii. 5; Gesen. § 116, 1; Ewald, § 289, b). וְזָכָר is used pleonastically. עִם, with, also among, like the Latin *apud* (comp. 2 Sam. xiii. 23; Isa. xxxviii. 11).

SECTION I.

CHAPTER I. 12—II. 26.

Cohélet, with all the resources of a monarch at his command (12), applied himself assiduously to discover, by the aid of wisdom, the nature of earthly pursuits (13), and found that they were all fruitless (14), since they could not rectify destinies (15). Reflecting, therefore, upon the large amount of wisdom he had acquired (16), he came to the conclusion that it is all useless (17), as the accumulation of it only increased his sorrow and pain (18). He then resolved to try pleasure, to see whether it would yield the desired happiness, but found that this too was vain (ii. 1), and hence denounced it (2); for, having procured every imaginable pleasure (3-10), he found that it was utterly insufficient to impart lasting good (11). Whereupon he compared wisdom with pleasure (12); and, though he saw the former had a decided advantage over the latter (13-14, a), yet he also saw that it does not exempt its

possessor from death and oblivion, but that the wise and the fool must both alike die and be forgotten (14 b-16). This made him hate both life and the possessions which, though acquired by industry and wisdom, he must leave to another, who may be a reckless fool (17-21), convincing him that man has nothing from his toil but wearisome days and sleepless nights (22-23); that there is, therefore, nothing left for man but to enjoy himself (24 a); yet this, too, he found was not in the power of man (24 b-25); God gives this power to the righteous, and withholds it from the wicked; and that it is, after all, transitory (26).

12, 13 I, Coheleth, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And

12 *I Coheleth, &c.* The sacred writer now proceeds to prove the burden of the argument stated in the prologue, and to shew the vanity of all human efforts to satisfy the craving of the immortal soul, by the failure of the many experiments which he has made to that effect. The first effort he made was wisdom (19-18), an experiment so natural to an intellectual being, and which many cultivated minds have made since, in the absence of a belief in a future state. Coheleth states that he, having been a king, had ample means and opportunities of testing the best of the varied speculations of men. The præterite tense, *הָיִיתִי*, *I was king, &c.*, shews that at the time when this was written Solomon was no longer king. The attempt of Ibn Ezra to account for this præterite, by insinuating עֲנִי הָעֵת הַזֶּה כִּי נִחַרְתִּי יָמִי דִּבְרוֹ כְּאִלּוּ יָמִיר לְדוֹרֹת הַבָּאִים כִּדּוֹךְ נִסְחִי בִּימֵי הָיִי, *that Solomon wrote it in his old age, and appeals, as it were, to the new or rising generations, and tells them such and such things I tried in my lifetime*, is an ingenious conceit, and does not remove the difficulty. The Chaldee fully felt this dilemma, and hence resorted to the traditional fable that Solomon, having departed from the words of the Law in the pride of his heart, was dethroned by Ashmodai, king of the demons, and thus said, "I was king but am not now;" comp. also Midrash Yalkut, *in loco*; Talmud, Gittin, 68, b; Midrash Maase Bishlemo Hammelech, in Jellinek's

Baith Hammidrash ii., p. 86. Similarly Rashi, *הָיִיתִי מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם וְלִבְסוֹף עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלִבְסוֹף עַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לְגִדּוֹר וְלִבְסוֹף עַל מְקוֹל שְׂדֵה נֹאמָר הָיִיתִי מֶלֶךְ בְּיִרְשָׁלַיִם אֲבָל אֲנִשִּׁי מֶלֶךְ*, *I was at first king over the whole world, then only over Israel, then only over Jerusalem, and then over my stick, for it is said, 'I was king in Jerusalem,' but I am not king now*; There is no doubt that the fable of Solomon's dethronement arose from an anxious desire to account for this difficulty, as the Rabbins evidently saw that *הָיִיתִי* means *I was*, and *am no more*, and to make Solomon die a penitent (see Steinschneider, Heb. Lit., p. 47). As far, however, as history is concerned, we know that Solomon was king till his death; and as he, therefore, could not write "I was king, and am no more," which the Rabbins themselves admit is the meaning of *הָיִיתִי*, we, who do not believe the traditional fable, must conclude that some one later than Solomon was the author of this book. Moreover the expression (*בְּיִרְשָׁלַיִם*), *in Jerusalem*, also shews that the book was written after Solomon, when the kingdom was divided into two, and when there was another royal residence besides Jerusalem. Ibn Ezra's attempt to elude this, by saying, *ואמר בירושלים בעבור היות מקומה נכון לקבל*, *that Jerusalem is mentioned because it was the proper place for acquiring wisdom*, does not comport with an address of a king to his contemporaneous people.

13. *And I gave my heart, &c.* Thus circumstanced, Coheleth exa-

I gave my heart to enquire diligently into wisdom respecting all that is done under heaven; this is an evil business which God hath given to the children of men to

mined, by the help of wisdom or philosophy, the nature of all human actions, in order to discover those sublunary gratifications and enjoyments which would remove the desponding impression made by the contemplation of the permanency and regularity in the objects and laws of nature, contrasted with the transitoriness and instability of man. But he soon found that the endeavour to seek human happiness in wisdom was a vain employment, which God has wisely imposed upon man, who, in the pride of his heart, looks to his own faculties for an infallible guide to happiness. As the heart is regarded among the Hebrews and other nations, not only as the seat of the passions, but also as possessing the faculty of thinking, judging, &c., &c. (Is. x. 7; Judg. xvi. 17; Job. xii. 3; 1 Chron. xxix. 18; comp. also *cor* in Latin; Cicero, Tusc. i. 9; Plaut. Pers. iv. 4. 71); hence arose the phrases *לִבִּי*, *to give one's heart to something* (*vide infra*, ver. 17; vii. 21; viii. 9. 16; Dan. x. 12; 1 Chron. xxii. 19); *הִכֵּן לִבִּי* (2 Chron. xii. 14; xxx. 19); *שִׁים לִבִּי* (Is. xli. 22; Hag. ii. 15. 18); *שִׁחַ לִבִּי* (Job vii. 17; Ps. xlviii. 14; lxii. 11); and the Latin, *animum applicare, attendere*; hence, also, the phrases which apostrophise the heart, e.g., *דַּבֵּר לִבִּי*, *to speak to the heart* (ver. 16); *אָמַר לִבִּי*, *to say to the heart* (ii. 1). The rendering of Symmachus, *προτεθειμαι, I sat before myself, or, I proposed to myself*, is too languid. The Vulgate's rendering of this phrase is capricious and inconsistent. Thus, in the passage before us it is translated, *PROPOSUI IN ANIMO MEO, I proposed in my mind*; in ver. 17 of this chap., and viii. 9, *DEDI COR MEUM, I have given my heart*; in vii. 21, *NE ACCOMMODES COR TUUM, do not accommodate thine heart*; in viii. 16, *APPOSUI COR*

MEUM, I applied my heart. The synonymous expressions *לִבִּי* and *רוּחִי*, both primarily signifying *to go, to go in search of anything, to seek*, are here used not so much in any distinction of meaning, but, as two verbs of a similar import are frequently employed *to give intensity* to the statement (comp. *infra*, vii. 25; Song of Songs, v. 6; Matt. iv. 39). *לִבִּי*, *into wisdom*, is wrongly rendered *adverbially* by the Vulgate (*supienter*), which Luther (*weislich*), Holden (*sagaciously and diligently*), Preston (*scientifically*), &c., follow. The censure here uttered is not upon absolute wisdom, for this the sacred writer praises in the sequel; but upon wisdom acquired for the purpose of guiding in the gratification of his desires, and for finding in it solid happiness. The sublunary works are the productions of men, as the Chaldee rightly paraphrases it (*לִבִּי לְעֵצָה*), *and not*, as Ibn Ezra maintains, the operations of nature. *עָמַל*, from *עָמַד* *to labour, to toil oppressively, to be oppressed, afflicted*; hence *to cry out under it, then to cry aloud*, in a more extensive sense; *to call out, to let one's voice be heard through joy or sorrow*, thus *אֶן קוֹל עֲנוֹת וְאֶן קוֹל עֲנוֹת*, *not the sound of the cry of victory, nor the sound of the cry of defeat, the sound of singing I hear* (Exod. xxxii. 18), hence *to speak*, according to the analogy of *קָרָן*, from *קָרָה*, *from קָרָה*, denotes *work, business, employment, occupation*. The word only occurs in this book (*vide infra*, ii. 23, 26; iii. 10; iv. 8; v. 2, 13; viii. 16); but is frequently used in later Hebrew writings in this sense, which is also given by the Sept. Aquila, Theodo. (*παρασπονδομαι*), Symm. (*ἀσχολομαι*), and many modern commentators, as, for instance, Knobel, De Wette, Preston, Philippson, &c.

14 busy themselves therewith. I considered all the works that are done under the sun, and behold they are all

The renderings *Mühe* (Luther), *travail* (Auth. Ver.), *curiosity* (Holden), do not exactly express the sense. *רָעָה*, liter. *an employment of sadness*, i. e., *a sad, an evil employment, or business*. *רָעָה*, which is here, as frequently elsewhere, a noun (comp. Exod. xxxii. 22; Ps. lxxviii. 49), is placed in the genitive, after *רָעָה*, to express its quality; the same construction occurs in iv. 8 and v. 13 (comp. Gesen. § 106, 1; Ewald, § 287, f). The Sept. uniformly translates *רָעָה* in the three places, *πενεσιμας* *penesimās*, *an evil occupation*; whilst the Vulg. inconsistently renders it here, *occupatio pessima*, *utterly bad occupation*; in iv. 8 and v. 13, *afflictio pessima*, *utterly bad affliction*. The pronoun *אֲנִי* is implied before *רָעָה* (Gesen. § 123, 3; Ewald, § 332). *רָעָה* is not to give evidence of himself (some quoted by Ibn Ezra, Desvieux, &c.), nor for their humiliation (another opinion quoted by Ibn Ezra, Hodgson, &c.), nor that they may weary themselves therein (Luther, Boothroyd, &c.), for these renderings are against the signification of *רָעָה*, by which the meaning of *רָעָה* must be determined, since the phrase *רָעָה* is a construction of very frequent occurrence (comp. 2 Sam. xvi. 23; 2 Kings xiii. 14; Gesen. § 138, 1; Rem. 1; Ewald, § 281, a). The Sept., Vulg., Syriac, Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Knobel, De Wette, Preston, &c., rightly retain the idiom.

14. I considered all the works, &c. Having summarily stated, in the preceding verses, that he was disappointed in the wisdom by which he had hoped to remove the sad impression which the contemplation mentioned in 2-11 left upon his mind, the sacred writer gives in this and in the following verse the cause of this disappointment. With all the help that this so much coveted wisdom could render, he found that

the efforts made, by her assistance, to secure comfort and solid happiness, are mere vanity and striving after the wind. *רָעָה*, to see, to view, to consider. *הַמַּעֲשִׂים*, the works spoken of in the preceding verse. The phrase *רָעָה*, which also occurs in ii. 11. 17. 26; iv. 4. 6; vi. 9, has produced a variety of renderings, owing to the different etymologies assigned to *רָעָה*. Thus the Syriac

(ܪܥܐܗ), the Chaldee (ܪܥܐܗ), Vulg. (*afflictus spiritus*), Rashi (רָעָה), Alshech, Coverdale, Authorised Version, &c., have *breaking down or vexation of spirit*, i. e., the contemplation of these things breaks down or produces a crushing effect on, or irritates, one's spirits, deriving *רָעָה* from *רָעָה* = *רָעָה*, to break, to depress. But as *רָעָה*, according to the analogy of *רָעָה*, from *רָעָה*, *רָעָה*, from *רָעָה*, can grammatically only be derived from *רָעָה*, which is moreover corroborated by the parallel form, *רָעָה* (*infra*, ver. 17; iv. 16), this rendering is inadmissible. As the only legitimate root, *רָעָה*, however, signifies both *to feed*, and then spiritually *to feed or feast upon anything*, *to delight in anything*, hence different interpretations have been defended, based upon one or the other shade of meaning of the root. Thus Aquila, Theod. (ῥεῖν ἀνίστασθαι), Symmachus (ῥεῖν ἀνίστασθαι), have *feeding upon the wind*; Rashbam, *a pleasure for the talented*, (רָעָה רָעָה בְּלִבִּי); Desvieux, *company for the wind*; but these interpretations are too artificial. It is therefore better to take the secondary meaning of the word, viz., *to desire*, to *strive after anything*, hence *רָעָה*, *a striving after the wind*; so the Sept. (ἀπειροσύναις), Ibn Ezra (רָעָה), Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Knobel, De Wette, Noyes, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, &c. This is corroborated by

15 vanity, and striving after the wind; for the depressed cannot be set right, since he that is gone cannot be num-

Hos. xii. 2, where *רָעָה*, stands in parallelism with *רָעָה*.

15. The depressed cannot be set right, &c. And the reason of this is to be found in the fact, that no cogitation of the human mind, no amount of wisdom, however great, can remove the depression produced by the fact stated in 2-11, since it cannot recall one who has departed this life to be numbered among the living. Thus the hope of finding comfort in wisdom, terminates with the same gloomy conclusion, as the contemplation of nature in verse 11. *רָעָה*, Pual part. of *רָעָה* i. q., *רָעָה*, to curve, to bend, passive to be bent, bowed down, depressed (Ps. xxxviii. 7), *רָעָה* is masculine, and, according to the analogy of *רָעָה*, signifies *he that is wanting*, *he that is gone*. *רָעָה*, to be numbered with (comp. Isa. liii. 12), i. e., *אֶת הַחַיִּים*, with the living. As the second clause assigns the reason for the statement made in the first, the *ו* in *רָעָה* is therefore to be rendered *for*, since (Gesen. § 155, l. e.) This we believe to be the most natural interpretation of the verse, which has called forth such a variety of explanations from time immemorial to the present day. Thus the Talmud (Jebamoth, 22, b) explains the first clause of *illegitimate offspring* *הַבָּנִים הַזֵּה* *illegitimate offspring*. The Vulgate has, *PERVERSI DIFFICILE CORRIGUNTUR, ET STULTORUM INFINITUS EST NUMERUS*, *the perverse are difficult to be corrected, and the fools are infinite in number*. The Chaldee refers it to the sins of man, and his inability to repent after death. *As a man who has corrupted his ways in this world, and dies in them without repentance, cannot amend after his death; and a man who departs from the Law and the Prophets when alive, cannot be numbered with the righteous in Paradise after his death*. This Midrashic explanation is followed by St. Jerome

in his commentary: *QUI PERVERSUS NISI ANTE CORRIGATUR, NON POTEST ADORNARI; RECTA ORNATUM RECIPUNT, ET CURVA CORRECTIONEM, he that is perverse, unless he be first corrected, cannot be adorned; right things receive adorning, and crooked things correction*. Similarly Rashi, *מִתָּעַר בְּחַיָּיו לֹא יוֹכֵל לְחַקֵּן מִשְׁמַחַת הַיָּמִים שֶׁהָיָה עִמָּם בְּקוֹל מִמֶּנּוּ הַבְּשָׂרִים לֹא יוֹכֵל לְחַמֵּד עִמָּם עַד שֶׁיִּבְרָא, he who is perverted when alive, cannot correct himself when dead; and he who absented himself from the assembly of the righteous, cannot be numbered with them when they receive their reward*. Rashbam refers it to the inability of man who has once perverted his deeds, ever to appear right in the presence of God as before. *שָׂאם עוֹת אִישׁ אֶחָד מִפְּעֻשֵׁי אִינוּ יוֹכֵל לְהִיוֹת מִתּוֹקן בְּמִשְׁפָּט כְּתוּבָה לִפְנֵי ה' וְאִם חָסֵר שׁוֹם דָּבָר אֶחָד חֲסֹר אִינוּ יוֹכֵל לְהִיוֹת עִדּוֹ מִיָּד וְסִפּוֹר עִם הַמִּתְעַר שֶׁשֶּׁחֲרִי*. Ibn Ezra mentions two different interpretations. According to one, Coheleth saw that everything is worthless; that emptiness cannot be rendered substantial, for *natural defectiveness* (*קָצָה*) is irreparable or irremediable, because that defectiveness is inborn, and one who becomes imperfect (*קָצָה*) cannot be numbered among the perfect ones. *בְּלִי חֲסֹר* would accordingly stand for *one who has failed*, *בְּלִי* being omitted before the word *קָצָה*; or *חֲסֹר* might be taken as an adjective, like *רָעָה*, or as a noun belonging to *קָצָה*, so that *קָצָה* by itself would be innate defectiveness, and *קָצָה חֲסֹר* contracted defectiveness. "According to the other interpretation, however, man is not naturally defective, but is, by birth, placed in imperfect circumstances, and has no power to perfect himself; and it is generally found that those who strive to find out these sources by the help of astrology or natural science, strive to no purpose; and this is the case with most men, and most of their

16 bered again. I therefore spake to my heart saying, "I, lo! I have acquired far greater wisdom than any one who was

works." Thus, according to the first interpretation, the rendering of this verse would be, "The naturally defective is irreparable, and he who becomes imperfect can no more be numbered among the perfect ones;" and, according to the second, "The imperfect has no power to perfect himself, and the cause of the imperfection he cannot fathom," which Reynolds, Patrick, Gill, &c., nearly follow. Holden has, "That which is perverse is with difficulty corrected, and that which is defective is with difficulty supplied." These commentators apply this verse to the moral endeavours of man. Boothroyd and Philippon render it, "What is crooked cannot be made straight, nor can the defects of things be numbered," i. e., all the efforts of man are vain, because the existing deficiencies cannot be improved, but must remain deficient, and these deficiencies are not to be met with here and there, but are innumerable. We will only remark here, on this interpretation, which refers it to man's scientific efforts, that it would require חֲקִירוֹת in the plural, and אֵין חֲקִירָה. Knobel and Stuart, who, taking the same view, refer the second clause to the inability of man to supply the things wanted to render human life happy, escape this censure. Noyes and others regard this verse as a proverbial phrase, introduced "to assign a reason why human striving should be vain, and human pursuits should be so incapable of affording satisfaction, namely, the perverseness of human nature, and the imperfections of human things. As that which is by nature crooked cannot by human endeavours be straightened — as the vine, for instance, cannot be made to grow up straight, like the poplar; and as that which is naturally wanting to anything cannot be supplied by human exertion — for instance, a

man cannot be made to possess wings, like a bird, or more than two hands or feet — so there are irregularities, discords, imperfections, in human life and the course of human things, which are irremediable, and render it impossible for man to find complete satisfaction." Elster refers this verse to the imperfection of all human efforts both moral and physical, and their inability to obtain for man his highest aim; the realities of life never coming up to one's conceptions, there being always something deficient which precludes the possibility of man's ever securing a complete harmony between them. But all these interpretations, apart from the other objections which might be urged against some of them separately, miss the thread of the argument. The design of the sacred writer is to shew that his resort to practical wisdom, for having the difficulty and sadness removed which the contemplation of nature has produced upon his mind, was "vanity and striving after the wind," since the fact stated in verse 11 cannot be obviated. To take, therefore, the verse before us as descriptive of the moral state of man, or of his physical disabilities, or of the defects in nature, is to overlook the very burden of the writer, as expressed in vv. 4 and 11, to which he evidently here returns, in shewing the inefficiency of wisdom, as is plain from our rendering, which is moreover corroborated by the fact that the Vulg., St. Jerome in his commentary, the Chaldee, Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, &c., take חֲקִירָה and חֲקִירָה as referring to persons, and not to things.

16. I therefore spake, &c. Having described to us the inability of wisdom to remove that depression, the sacred writer makes a most pathetic appeal to his heart, being the seat of the intellectual faculties (*vide supra*,

before me over Jerusalem — my heart having seen much

ver. 13), before he summons it to try another experiment. For the origin of the phrase לִבִּי דַם לִי, to speak to the heart, and similar phrases (chap. ii. 1. 15; Gen. xxiv. 45; 1 Sam. i. 13; Ps. xiv. 1; xv. 2), see ver. 13. The pronoun לִי, before the verb, with the nominal suffix, is not "designed to give special emphasis to the clause" (Stuart), but is used pleonastically, which is one of the characteristics of this book; comp. *infra*, ii. 1. 11. 14. 15. 18. 20. 24, &c. הִתְגַּדַּלְתִּי חֲכָמָה, literally, I made great and increased, i. e., I greatly increased, I became exceedingly great in wisdom; the second verb, which is used as a complement, is subordinate to the first; *vide infra*, ii. 9; iv. 17; viii. 3; Song of Songs, ii. 3; Gesen. § 142, 3; Ewald, § 285. חֲכָמָה is the accusative; comp. 1 Kings, x. 7; Gesen. § 138. The Vulg. erroneously renders this clause *magnus effectus sum, et præcessi omnes sapientia qui*, &c., which Luther, Coverdale, Authorised Version, &c. follow, but which is rightly rejected by Ibn Ezra and most modern commentators. The preposition לְ before בְּנֵי, like *super* in Latin, and our words *over, above*, expresses the idea of surpassing, going beyond anything; comp. חֲכָמָה לְ חֲכָמִים, thou art greater than the report which I have heard (2 Chron. ix. 6; Gen. lxix. 26; Ps. lxxxix. 8; Job xxiii. 2). The rendering, therefore, of Umbreit, "I have gathered much wisdom respecting all things," &c., is incorrect. בְּנֵי, as frequently, is used distributively, every one, any one, which accounts for the verb חָכַם being in the singular. The reading לִבִּי חֲכָמָה in the plural, which is found in one of De Rossi's MSS., and which is favoured by the Sept., Syriac, Chaldee, Vulg., &c., has evidently arisen from a desire of uniformity to ii. 7. The preposition לְ before חֲכָמִים is used in the sense of power, dominion, rulership, and refers to all the kings that sat upon the Jewish throne. As, however, one king only reigned before Solomon

in Jerusalem, viz., his father David, we have here another proof that this book must have been written after Solomon, at a time when the writer could look back upon a whole succession of kings. Those who maintain the Solomonic authorship of this book have resorted to various expedients, in order to account for this incongruity. Thus the Chaldee has paraphrased it לִבִּי חֲכָמָה רַב הִתְגַּדַּלְתִּי, I have increased wisdom above all the sages that were before me in Jerusalem, which Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, and many Christian commentators follow. Reynolds, Patrick, &c., refer it to all men; Gussetius restricts it to the princes, rulers, and civil magistrates in Jerusalem; and Gill refers it to the governors of Jerusalem, to the Jebusites, as well as to Saul and David. But see ver. 12, and ii. 7.

My heart having seen, &c. This clause gives the reason why the sacred writer appeals to the heart; because it was the heart that acquired that surpassing amount of wisdom and knowledge for the purpose of removing the sad impression, Coheleth therefore confers with it about the fruitless result of this experiment before trying another. As this clause is merely exegetical, it is better rendered participially. The heart is described as seeing wisdom, for the reason given in ver. 13. The phrase to see wisdom (see also *infra*, ii. 12, and Jer. ii. 31) is owing to the fact that the Jews did not view abstractions, but regarded the operations of the mind and feelings when they became objective and were visible in a concrete form. חֲכָמָה, Hiphil, infinitive, abso., which has generally *Tserc*, with or without *Yod* (comp. חֲכָמָה, Judges xvii. 3; חֲכָמָה, Exod. viii. 11; Gesen. § 53, 3, Rem. 2), meaning literally *multiplicando*, is used adverbially (*vide infra*, ii. 7; v. 6. 11, 16. 19; vii. 16, 17; ix. 18; xii. 9; Gesen. § 75, 5, Rem. 14, § 131, 2; Ewald, § 280, c). The Vulg., mis-

17 wisdom and knowledge, for I have given my heart to know wisdom and knowledge—I know that even this is
18 striving after the wind. For, in much wisdom is much sadness, and multiplying knowledge is multiplying sorrow.

taking this usage of the infinitive, has wrongly rendered this clause: ET MENS MEA CONTEMPLATA EST MULTA SAPIENTER ET DIDICI, and my mind has contemplated many things wisely, and I have learned. Luther is equally wrong: Und mein Herz hat viel gelernt und erfahren.

17. For I have given my heart, &c. This is expegetical of the last clause in the preceding verse: "My heart has seen much wisdom and knowledge, because I have applied it to acquire wisdom and knowledge;" the participial rendering might therefore still be retained. The Authorised Version and Stuart's translation are confused; Coverdale's is far better: "My heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge, for thereunto I applied my mind, that I might know what were wisdom and knowledge." The words חָכְמָה וְדַעַת הָיוּ לִי וְלִבִּי נָתַתִּי לָהֶם are rendered by most modern commentators, to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly; but this is against the meaning of the words, as well as against the scope of the passage. נָתַתִּי is not an infinitive, and can therefore not be rendered to know, like נָתַתִּי; it is a noun, and must be translated knowledge; it is joined by the copula to חָכְמָה, wisdom, as חָכְמָה is to הוֹלִיטָה, and is regarded so by the Sept., Vulg., Syriac, Chaldee, &c. חָכְמָה, again, is not folly, but, on the contrary, means prudence; it frequently occurs in Chaldee and later Hebrew writings, and has invariably this sense, which is also given here by the Sept., Syriac, Chaldee, Rashbam, Luther, &c. Moreover, this rendering is contrary to the context; the intention of the sacred writer is not to prove the inutility of folly and madness, but to show the inefficiency of wisdom to remove that sad impression which the

contemplation of nature had produced upon his mind, and to secure lasting happiness. The introduction, therefore, of "folly and madness" breaks the whole thread of the argument. This objection is, of course, equally applicable to the expression חָכְמָה, folly, as it now stands in the text, which, in order to avoid this dilemma, has unwarrantably been rendered by Dathe, Desvoeux, &c., splendid matters; by Gill, things boasted of; by Boothroyd, excellence. I have, therefore, no hesitation in concluding that the words have crept into the text through the carelessness of a transcriber. This is placed beyond the shadow of a doubt by the immediately following verse, which concludes the argument, stating the result of acquiring חָכְמָה, wisdom, and דַּעַת, knowledge,—the very words used in this verse,—but makes no mention whatever of "folly and madness." But if the clause is retained, not to obscure the argument, חָכְמָה, intelligence, must be substituted for חָכְמָה, folly, according to the Sept., Syriac, Chaldee, and Arabic. The perfect, חָכְמָה, is used for the present (comp. Job ix. 2; x. 13; Gesen. § 126, 3; Ewald, § 135, b). הוּא, prop. pro., third pers., is used for the auxiliary verb to be (comp. Gesen. § 121, 2). וְדַעַת is the same as דַּעַת in verse 14, from דָּעָה, just as חָכְמָה and דַּעַת are merely different forms from the root דָּעָה, and have the same meaning (Gesen. § 84, 15, 16). The Vulg., mistaking the sense, translates the last clause: IN HIS QUOQUE ESSET LABOR ET AFFLICTIO SPIRITUS, in this also there was labour and vexation of spirit. Equally erroneous is Luther's rendering, Ich ward aber gewahr, daß solches auch Mühe ist.

18. For in much wisdom, &c., i. e., since the acquisition of human know-

ii. 1 I then spake to my heart, Come, now, let me try thee with mirth, and thou shalt see pleasure! And, lo! this

ledge, so far from being able to remove the depression and secure solid happiness, causes only sorrow and disappointment. For the more knowledge we acquire, the more clearly and acutely we see and feel the fleetness of life, the emptiness of our enjoyments; and the abortiveness of all our efforts, based upon this knowledge, to ameliorate our condition. It must be borne in mind that the sacred writer does not here depreciate the acquisition of wisdom in itself, or absolutely, for he eulogises it in this very book (*vide infra*, ii. 13, 14, &c.) It is the proud human wisdom which dethrones God and deifies man, pretending to give him laws and regulations whereby to make him happy; it is this wisdom to which he resorted in trouble; believing its pretensions, he sought to be comforted by its power, and found, as every one similarly circumstanced will find, that the more he acquired of it, for the purpose of finding comfort in it, apart from God, the greater was his sorrow and disappointment. A similar instance of absolute language being used instead of relative, also occurs in viii. 12, 13. For the meaning of עָנָה, see *infra*, vii. 3; Ps. vi. 8; x. 14. חָכְמָה is taken by some as the third person imp. Hiph., and the construction is regarded as elliptical, חָכְמָה to stand for חָכְמָה וְדַעַת, "he who increases" (Herzfeld, Hitzig, Gesen. § 50, 3, Rem. 1); but the word is better taken as the participle of חָכְמָה (comp. Is. xxix. 14; xxxviii. 5), which, as is evident from other forms of the Hiphil, returns to the Kal, and forms its participle according to this conjugation (Ewald, § 127, b). The Chaldee paraphrase has rightly rendered it by חָכְמָה, so also Rashbam. The Sept., mistaking the word עָנָה, vexation, for the assonant נָתַתִּי, knowledge, renders the first clause of this verse ὅτι ἐν πολλῇ σοφίᾳ πλεονέχων γινώσκων, "he who increases

wisdom increases knowledge." The Chaldee refers the augmentation of sorrow here spoken of, not to the man who acquires wisdom, but to God, and to his relatives, and curiously paraphrases the verse. "For the man who increases wisdom, when he sins and does not repent, increases the wrath of God; and the youth who is multiplying knowledge, and dies in his youth, is multiplying pain in the heart of his relatives." Equally erroneous is the Vulgate, which, contrary to the signification of the word חָכְמָה, and the scope of the whole passage, renders the last clause ET QUI ADDIT SCIENTIAM, ADDIT ET LABOREM, and he who adds knowledge adds also labour, which St. Jerome explains, SAPIENS DOLET, TAM IN ABDITO QUAM IN PROFUNDO LATERE SAPIENTIAM, NEO ITA SE PRÆBERE MENTIBUS, SICUT LUMEN, RISUI, SED PER TORMENTA QUÆDAM ET INTOLERANDUM LABOREM JUGI MEDITATIONE ET STUDIO AD EAM PERVENIRE, the wise man deplores that wisdom, which, lying hid in a depth of secrecy, does not shew itself to the mind as light does to the eyes, so that a man cannot attain to it unless it be by torments and intolerable labour, by continual meditation and study, applying it to the labour which one has in acquiring knowledge. Luther, though keeping more to the meaning of חָכְמָה, has given it the same erroneous explanation, Und wer viel lehren muß, der muß viel leiden.

1. I then spake to my heart, &c. Having found the acquisition of wisdom unable to remove the depression and satisfy the longings of the soul, Coheleth now appeals to his heart to try another experiment; he leaves the laboratory of knowledge, and betakes himself to the bowers of pleasure; but, alas! this, too, he finds unable to divert his sorrow, and allay the cravings of his mind. The heart or soul, being the seat of

heart to draw my body with pleasure, my mind guiding with wisdom, and to lay hold on folly, till I should see what is good for the sons of men which they should do

resolved with his heart—for the reason given in ver. 1—to indulge in banqueting and pleasure, and thus try to satisfy the cravings of the soul. *חָשַׁבְתִּי בְלִבִּי*, *liter., I thought with my heart, i. e., I and my mind came to the conclusion.* The sentence is pregnant, implying the result of the cogitation, and the determination to act in accordance with it. *וְצָרָה*, *to draw, to bring out, to cheer*; so

the Syriac (ܡܠܚܡܬܐ), Rashi (לחזקת), Rashbam (לחזקת), Lee, &c. Others, however, render it *to lead* (Chaldee *לְבָרַח* *to lead my body into the banqueting-house*), *to inure, to train* (Parchon *לְבָרַח* *to inure, to train*), *to indulge* (Mendelssohn, Preston, &c.), *to make robust, to strengthen* (Reynolds, Patrick, Gill, Gesenius, Noyes, &c.), *to allure* (Herzfeld, Heiligstedt) *to hold on, to be constantly at it* (Knobel, De Wette, Elster, &c.), *to hold on, i. e., to cherish* (Fürst), which are far less suitable to the expression *לֵב*, *wine*. The term *לֵב* is frequently used by a synecdoche for all *delicacies and feasting* (comp. Prov. ix. 2; Song of Songs viii. 2), and is well explained by Rashi *כל סעודה עונה על שם הלב*. Ibn Ezra appropriately renders *וְצָרָה* by *body*. For the omission of the suffix after *לֵב*, see Gesen. § 145, 2.

My mind guiding with wisdom, &c. Coheleth resolved to draw his body, as it were, with the alluring cords of pleasure, determined that his passions should not be wildly let loose, but that wisdom, by her prudent guidance in the selection of earthly gratifications, should hold the reins, and restrain the passions from running riot. This explanation is evident, from ver. 9. The words *לֵב* *חָכְמָה*, *my heart guiding with wisdom*, are parenthetical, as is evident from

וְצָרָה, *to lay hold*, which, together with *וְצָרָה*, *to draw*, depends upon *לֵב*, *I resolved*. The expression *לֵב*, *heart*, possessing the faculty of thinking, judging, &c. (*vide supra*, i. 13), is here more properly rendered *mind*, and stands in opposition to *וְצָרָה*, *body*. *וְצָרָה*, *to guide*, is evidently designed to carry out the figure begun with, *וְצָרָה*, *to draw*. It was not to be a blind drawing into every pleasure, but guided by vigilant prudence.

And to lay hold on, &c., i. e., indulge himself in pleasure which he subsequently found to be mere folly, as stated in the preceding verse. This he did, not to revel in sensuality, but to see whether he, with all the vast resources at his command, could not discover how to sweeten the years of man's existence, few and bitter, contrasted with the ever-enduring objects of nature. To recount the almost countless explanations and observations palmed upon this verse, would be unprofitable. We must be satisfied with the leading renderings and expositions. Already the ancient versions are very discordant. Thus the Sept. has *καὶ κατασφάμην ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μου ἵνα αἴσθω τὴν σάρκα μου, καὶ καρδίᾳ μου ἀδύνατον ἐν σοφίᾳ καὶ τοῦ κρατῆσαι ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ*, *and I examined whether my heart would draw out my flesh as wine, and my heart led in wisdom, and to lay hold on pleasure*, altering the text into *וְצָרָה* *אֶל לֵב חָכְמָה*; the Vulg., *constravi in corde meo abstrahere a vino carnem meam, ut animum meum transferrem ad sapientiam devitareque stultitiam, &c.*, which Luther (*da dachte ich in meinem Herzen, meinen Leib vom Wein zu ziehen, und mein Herz zur Weisheit zu ziehen, daß ich ergriffe was Thorheit ist, &c.*); and Coverdale (so I thought in my heart to withdraw my flesh from wine, to apply my mind unto wisdom,

4 under heaven, the numbered days of their lives; I therefore

and to comprehend foolishness) follow, altering *וְצָרָה* into *וְצָרָה*, *וְצָרָה* into *וְצָרָה*, and *וְצָרָה* into *וְצָרָה*. Luther and Coverdale, not following the Vulgate in the last alteration, take the word *וְצָרָה*, *to lay hold of, to seize*, in the sense of *comprehending*. As these emendations are not supported by any MSS., we shall not pause to animadvert upon them, but pass on to the rendering given by St. Jerome in his commentary, in which he adheres to the text; there he translates this verse, *Consideravi in corde meo, ut traherem in vino carnem meam, et cor meum deduxit me in sapientiam*, which he explains: *VOLUI VITAM MEAM TRADERE DELICIIS, ET CARNEM MEAM AB OMNIBUS CURIS LIBERARE, ET QUASI VINO SIC VOLUPTATE SOPIRE; SED COGITATIO MEA, ET RATIO NATURALIS RETRAXERUNT ME, ET DEDUXERUNT AD SAPIENTIAM REQUIRENDAM, I desired to give my life to pleasures, and free my body from all cares, and put it to sleep, as it were, with wine and pleasure; but my thoughts and natural reason drew me back, and led me to seek wisdom*; so also Rashi, *אך אם בשר נמשך ביני לבי מונעני בחכמה, לחזקת בשרי, though my body inclined after pleasure, my mind urged by wisdom to lay hold on the Law*; but this is contrary to verse 9, where we are told that wisdom, so far from repudiating, assisted in procuring pleasures. Ibn Ezra, who is followed by Mendelssohn, Reynolds, Patrick, Gill, Jermin, Desvoeux, Preston, Noyes, &c., maintains that Coheleth, seeing wisdom by itself produced pain, and pleasure by itself was of no use, resolves, in this verse, on a middle course—to unite the pursuits of wisdom with those of pleasure. But this is contrary to the scope of the passage, which obviously describes in detail (4–11) the pleasures categorically denounced as folly in ver. 2. But what is most subversive of this united indulgence in both wisdom and pleasure, is the fact that Coheleth,

having finished his description of wisdom, as given in i. 12–18, and of pleasure, as given in 4–11, discussed, in his *resumé*, ver. 12–14, the respective merits of wisdom and folly separately, and makes no mention whatever of this middle course, or union of both wisdom and pleasure. Hodgson's rendering, "I enquired of mine heart whether I should give myself unto wine, but mine heart inclined unto wisdom, or whether I should embrace folly," is contrary to the text. *וְצָרָה* *וְצָרָה* is the *accusative of time*; the same phrase occurs in v. 17.

4. *I therefore increased my possessions.* Here, and in the following six verses, Coheleth enumerates some of the pleasures and enjoyments in which he indulged. The words *וְצָרָה* *וְצָרָה* yield excellent sense in their literal translation, *I increased my works or possessions*, and do not refer to Solomon's costly and splendid ivory throne, overlaid with gold, as described in 1 Kings x. 18, but describe the undertakings of this monarch generally. David had built a cedar house (2 Chron. ii. 3), possessed vineyards, orchards, treasures of all kinds, and servants of all sorts (1 Chron. xxvii. 25–31); but Solomon, seeking happiness in grandeur, *increased or multiplied* (*וְצָרָה*) these *possessions* (*וְצָרָה*) which he, as successor to the throne, inherited from his father. Hence "he builded houses;" not satisfied with the royal residence already existing, he erected another, the completion of which occupied thirteen years; he built a mansion for his wife, and various other edifices (1 Kings vii. 1–8; ix. 17–19). *וְצָרָה*, *work*, like *וְצָרָה*, is used metonymically for the effects of work, that which is gained by work, *wealth, riches, estates, possessions* (Exod. xliii. 12; 1 Sam. xxv. 2; Isa. xxvi. 12). Ibn Ezra's explanation of *וְצָרָה*, *וְצָרָה*, viz., *עשיתי מעשים גדולים*, which is followed by Luther, Authorised Version, and almost all modern

increased my possessions, I builded me houses, I planted
5 me vineyards, I made me gardens and pleasure-grounds,

commentators, is, to say the least, an unnecessary paraphrase.

I planted me vineyards, &c. To the in-door pleasures he added out-door enjoyments. With all the pleasure that we derive from gardens and parks, those who have not travelled in the East can form but an inadequate idea how indispensable a part a garden forms of an Eastern's luxury, and how great is the enjoyment which he derives from it. The burning heat of the Eastern sun renders the interior of dwellings almost intolerable during the day. Shady arched walks, therefore, formed by vines planted in rows or avenues, and trained above a trellis-work, or airy and fragrant bowers formed by the outspread branches of trees in gardens, are retreats, the delight of which an Eastern alone can fully appreciate. It is this most enviable, quiet, and shady retreat that gave rise to the beautiful representation of happy and tranquil Israel, as sitting under vines and fig-trees (1 Kings iv. 25; Mich. iv. 4; Zech. iii. 10). No wonder that the Israelites selected such a charming spot for serving their heavenly Father (Gen. xxiv. 63; Matt. xxvi. 30; John xviii. 1, 2); for entertaining their earthly friends (Isa. li. 3); and for burying those dear to them (Gen. xxiii. 19, 20; 2 Kings xxi. 26; 2 Sam. xxv. 1). Because one vineyard is mentioned as belonging to Solomon (Song of Songs, viii. 11), Knobel concludes that he had only that one, and that "the author here exaggerates designedly, in order to shew that even the best means of pleasure do not yield any lasting satisfaction." But surely the words, "Solomon had a vineyard in Baal-Hammon," do not affirm, or even remotely imply, that he had none elsewhere. The one there mentioned was for a particular purpose (see my Commentary, *in loco*); the passage describes the vineyard

in that locality. Besides, even if we had not been told that Solomon had planted himself vineyards, we should naturally conclude that he had many, since they form such an essential part of Eastern enjoyment, and since he came into possession of his father's estates, which comprised vineyards (1 Chron. xxvii. 27). The Chaldee makes Solomon describe in this verse the good works which he performed, viz., the building of the Temple, and the various edifices and courts belonging to it. Even the vineyards, this paraphrase says, were planted that the Sanhedrin might have wine to refresh themselves during their sittings and their religious exercises, and for the purpose of offering oblations upon the altar. The most effectual refutation of this interpretation is to be found in verse 11, where the works are characterised as mere vanity and striving after the wind, which could surely not be said of such praiseworthy undertakings.

5. *I made me gardens, &c.* He had not only vineyards, but also gardens and pleasure-grounds, producing all kinds of delicious fruit, and aromatics, which are most calculated to regale the senses, and are so essential to Oriental luxury. The Hebrew names for the different kinds of gardens denote the occupation assigned to Adam when the Lord placed him in the garden of Eden. We are told that the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to cultivate it (עָבַדָּהּ), and to guard it (שָׁמְרָהּ); hence we find that the expressions denoting gardens signify one or the other of these two offices. Thus עָבַד is derived from עָבַד = עָבַר (for the termination עָבַד see Fürst, Lexicon, under עָבַד, c), to dig, hence a garden generally, cultivated by means of spades and axes (Judg. xv. 5; Job xxiv. 18), and afterwards applied especially to a vineyard. עָבַד is from עָבַד, to guard; hence that

6 and I planted in them trees of all sorts of fruit. I made
me pools of water, to water therefrom the grove shooting

which is guarded and protected against every intrusion, a garden; the German, Garten, and the English, garden, denote the same thing. עָבַד, according to the analogy of the quadrilateral עָבַד, is a compound of עָבַד and עָבַד, to break up, to separate, and denotes a garden, a pleasure-ground, either from its being separated, enclosed (see my commentary on the Song of Songs, iv. 13), or, which is perhaps better, from its being cultivated by breaking up the ground with ploughs or other implements. The difference between עָבַד and עָבַד cannot now be exactly defined; the former, however, seems to denote a garden containing smaller plants, such as herbs, flowers, as well as fruit-trees (Deut. xi. 10; 1 Kings xxi. 2), and the latter pleasure-grounds or parks planted with large trees, and containing different animals, in which sense it is also used in other languages (comp. Xenophon, Anab. i. 2. 4; Cyrop. i. 4, &c.; Koran, xxxiii. 11). From the delightful regions which it described, Paradise was afterwards used for the blessed abode of saints in glory (Luke xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 4; Rev. ii. 7; comp. Wemyss, Clavis Symb. 336; Kalisch, Gen. p. 108). The distinction which Ibn Ezra makes between these two expressions, viz., that in עָבַד trees of all kinds are grown (שֶׁ בָּנוּ אֵלֶּיךָ רִבּוֹת מִיָּדָיִם וְרִבּוֹת מִיָּדָיִם), while in עָבַד only one kind is planted (וְהָיָה מִיָּדָיִם אֶחָד), is not correct; the very passage to which he refers for proof of his assertion (Song of Songs iv. 13) contradicts it; for, not only are there pomegranates described as growing in this garden, but also cypresses and nards, and, in fact, "all sorts of frankincense trees." Those who maintain that עָבַד signifies a place containing smaller plants only, such as herbs, vegetables, shrubs, flowers, &c., overlook the fact that עָבַד, in them, refers to עָבַד,

garden, as well as עָבַד, pleasure-ground. It may be that the Chaldee paraphrase here is correct in taking the royal garden mentioned in Neh. iii. 15; 2 Kings xxv. 4, which was situated at the pool of Siloam, that is, at the mouth of Tyropæon (see Robinson, Palestine, i. p. 333, &c.), to be one of those which Solomon planted. עָבַד, sing., is used collectively (comp. וְהָיָה הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ בְּתוֹךְ הָעֵצִים וְהִסְתִּירָם מִן הָעֵצִים, and the man and his wife hid themselves among the trees of the garden Gen. iii. 8; Is. x. 19; Ps. lxxiv. 5).

6. *I made me pools of water, &c.* The intense heat in the East requires that plants should be frequently irrigated to preserve them from being parched up. As the streams which were not dried up in the summer were very few in Palestine, artificial reservoirs were made to receive the rain or collect the spring waters for times of need. These tanks of water constituted one of the most charming features in gardens; rows of palms or other trees, with outspread branches, and studded with fruit, encircled these rills, in whose waters the deep-blue or grey dove was frequently seen bathing, and reflecting upon its golden breast the splendid colours of the falling rays (Song of Songs v. 13). Maundrell gives a beautiful description of the effect which these artificial waters produced upon him, when seeing the garden of the Emir of Beyrout, anciently called Berytus — "The best sight that this place affords, and the most worthy to be remembered, is the orange garden. It contains a large quadrangular plot of ground, divided into sixteen lesser squares, four in a row, with walks between them. The walks are shaded with orange trees of a large spreading size. . . . Every one of these sixteen lesser squares in the garden was bordered with stone, and in the stone-work were troughs, very artistically contrived, for conveying the

7 up trees; I bought me men-servants and maid-servants,

water all over the garden, there being little outlets cut at every tree, for the stream as it passed by to flow out and water it" (see Early Travels in Palestine, Bohn's edition, pp. 415, 416). This will give us some idea of what the gardens and reservoirs of the wisest and wealthiest Eastern monarch must have been. The pool of the king, mentioned in Nehem. ii. 14, is said to be one of those which Solomon made (Joseph. Bel. Jud. v. 4, c. 2). בְּרִיכָה is the *construct* of בְּרִיכָה, a *pool*, instead of בְּרִיכָה, perhaps to distinguish it from the plural construct of בְּרִיכָה, a *blessing* (Ewald, § 212, c.), and is derived from the first meaning of בָּרַךְ, viz., to *kneel down*; hence a kneeling-place for cattle or men when drinking (comp. בְּרִיכָה הַנְּמִלִּים מִחוּץ לְעִיר אֶל בְּאֵר הַמֵּיִם, and he made his camels to kneel down without the city, by the well of water. (Gen. xxiv. 11; Judg. vii. 5, 6, &c.) These passages are decidedly against those who derive the word in question from the secondary meaning of בָּרַךְ, to *bless*; hence a *pool*, which was accounted a special blessing in hot countries, or בְּרִיךְ (Arabic), to *flow*. Instead of בְּרִיכָה, masculine, we should have expected בְּרִיכָה, feminine, since בְּרִיכָה, to which it refers, is feminine; but such disagreement in gender is of no uncommon occurrence (vide *infra*, x. 9; xi. 8; xii. 1). Although בְּרִיכָה is a *neuter intransitive*, yet it is followed by an *accusative* צִיִּים; such instances are not unfrequent with verbs signifying to *grow*, to *flow*, &c., and imply abundance in the thing that stands in the accusative; comp. עָלָה כָּל הָאֲשִׁוּרִים, the whole of it went up in nettles, i. e., it entirely changed into them (Prov. xxiv. 31; Isa. v. 6; xxxiv. 13); just as it is said a burning house goes up in flames and smoke (Gesén. § 138, 1, Rem. 2; Ewald, § 281, b).

7. I bought me man-servants, &c. An oriental potentate's happiness and luxury would be incomplete without a numerous retinue of ser-

vants of all kinds. To keep those magnificent edifices and pleasure-grounds in order, to provide for and serve his large and sumptuous table, to attend to his forty thousand stalls of horses (1 Kings iv. 26), Solomon must have required an enormous number of domestics, and it is therefore no wonder that when the Queen of Sheba beheld them "there was no more spirit in her" (1 Kings x. 6). The buying of servants here mentioned was practised among the Hebrews, in common with other nations, from time immemorial. Already Abraham, the father of the Hebrew nation, had an exceedingly large number of servants, which he bought (Gen. xvii. 12), and could muster three hundred and eighteen, born in his house, against the kings who had captured Lot and his household. (Gen. xiv.) Joseph was sold by his brothers as a slave to the Ishmaelites, who were traders both in costly spices and slaves (Gen. xxxvii. 28). Such slaves were called the *purchase of money* (מִקְנֵה כֶּסֶף), ἀργυρίωνται (Gen. xvii. 12, 23); their offspring, as well as the children of captives of war, who were made slaves (Numb. xxxi. 11, 26, 35; Deut. xx. 14, xxi. 10), born in bondage, belonged to the master, and are called *house-born* (בְּנֵי בֵּית), οἰκονομίαι, Gen. xiv. 14; xvii. 12), or *sons of a handmaid* (בְּנֵי אִמָּה), Exod. xxiii. 12; Ps. cxvi. 16), or *sons of the house* (בְּנֵי בֵּית), as in the text before us and Gen. xv. 3. The usual value of a servant was fifty silver shekels for an Israelite (Levit. xxvii. 3) and thirty for a non-Israelite (Exod. xxi. 32). It must not, however, be supposed that Hebrew servitude bears any resemblance to that of the ancient Greeks and Romans, or to the modern slavery of the United States. The fact that the Hebrew language has no word for *slave*, considered as a mere thing, or *instrument*, under the absolute mercy of another—that the name עֶבֶד simply

and had house-born servants; I had also many herds of oxen and sheep, above all who were before me in Jeru-

means *labourer*, and is the same which God gave to his chosen people Israel, to his favourite servant Moses, to the prophets and kings, while the Greek designation δούλος means *one bound or chained*, the Latin *mancipium* denotes *captured goods*, which seems also to be the meaning of the modern expression *slave*—would alone be sufficient to shew the dissimilarity between the Jewish system of servitude and the slavery of the nations alluded to. We are, however, not left to prove the dissimilarity from the etymology of these designations; the records of sacred and profane history place it beyond the shadow of a doubt. The Hebrew servant, whether an Israelite or not, had written upon his forehead by the hand of the Creator, that he, being a man, is, like his master, created in the *image of God* (Gen. i. 27, comp. with ix. 5, 6); the natural rights, therefore, of both master and servant alike were regarded by God, whose image they both bore, and equal provisions were made for both (2 Sam. xiv. 14; Prov. xxiv. 23, xxviii. 21; Job xxxiv. 19, &c.); the Greek slave was defined by Aristotle to be a *living working tool* and possession (ὁ δούλος ἡμ-ψυχον ὄργανον, Ethic. Nicom. viii. 13; ὁ δούλος κτήμα τι ἡμ-ψυχον, Polit. i. 4), and was regarded as possessing fewer faculties than a free man (Plato, Polit. i. 1. 13), as a being who had "nothing healthy in his soul," which naturally differed from other men, and as belonging "to a race in which men possessing any intellect ought never to trust." This, Plato (Leg. vi. 19) tells us, has the authority of the wisest of poets, who, when speaking of Zeus, says—

"Ἡμῶν γὰρ τ' ἀρετῆς ἀποαίνονται εὐρύσια Σείς Ἄνθρως, ὅτ' ἂν μιν κατὰ δούλιον ἡμᾶρ ἴλυσιν.
"Half their mind wide-seeing Jove has ta'en
From men, whose doom has slavery's day
brought on."—ODYS. xvii. 882.

The Hebrew servant, working with his master, who, like Saul or Elisha, followed behind the plough (1 Sam. xi. 5; 1 Kings xix. 19), or like Moses and David tended the flock (Exod. iii. 1; 1 Sam. xvi. 11, xvii. 20, 28, 34), also celebrated with his master, when they both came home in the evening, the Sabbath, and all the numerous festivals, which released him from labour nearly half the time (Exod. xx. 10; Deut. v. 14, &c.), and was instructed in morals and religion (Deut. xxxi. 10–13); the Greek and Roman slave, being regarded as belonging to a different caste, "was not to be spoken to as a free man" (Plato, Leg. vi. 19), and his testimony in courts of law was never taken unless extorted by torture (Demosth. c. Onetor. i. p. 874; Cic. Partit. Orat. 34, pro Sall. 28). The Hebrew servant, if he escaped from his master, could not be delivered up to him by the inhabitants of the place in which he sought refuge (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16); the Greek and Roman slave, when he ran away, was not allowed to take refuge anywhere, the master pursued him wherever he pleased (Xen. Mem. ii. 10, § 1, 2; Florus, iii. 19), and, when caught, branded him with a red-hot iron. The Hebrew servant had the full protection of the law, if he lost any member of his body through the brutal treatment of his master, he was immediately manumitted (Exod. xxi. 26, 27), and, if killed, the master was treated as a murderer (comp. Exod. xxi. 12, with verse 20, and Gen. ix. 5, 6), and, according to the Talmud (Sanhedrin, 52, b), was executed by the sword; the Roman slave had no personal rights; he was under the absolute power of his master, who could brand, torture, or put him to death at pleasure; if the master was murdered by a slave, or by an unknown assassin, all the slaves on the premises were put to

8 salem; I amassed me also silver and gold, and the treasures

death (Tacit. Ann. xiii. 32), a brutal instance of which happened in the reign of Nero, when four hundred were executed for the murder committed by one, on the person of Pedanius Secundus, prefect of the city (Tacit. Ann. xiv. 42-48). A Hebrew servant — and be it remembered that we are speaking all along of servants who are non-Israelites — could marry the daughter of his master (1 Chron. ii. 35), the master himself frequently took a maid-servant (Gen. xxx. 3; Deut. xxi. 10-14), or gave her to his son for wife (Exod. xxi. 9). And if the servant was an Israelite, he could only serve six years (Exod. xxi. 2; Levit. xxv. 41; Deut. xv. 12), during which time he was to be considered as a *hireling*, and treated with the leniency of a citizen (Levit. xxv. 39-43); he could therefore acquire property, and redeem himself before the Sabbath-year (Levit. xxv. 40); if, however, he was released at the end of six years, his master was enjoined to supply him with every comfort (Deut. xv. 14). Such, then, was the humane treatment of Hebrew servants, and it stands out in bold relief when contrasted with the inhuman treatment of the Greek and Roman slaves, or with the legal position of slaves in the United States. The reader will do well to consult the following works on this subject:—Saalfeld, *Archäologie der Hebräer*, ii. p. 236-248; *Mez.* *Recht*, p. 702-708; Becker's *Charities*, English edition; Parker, 1845, p. 270-280; Gallus, p. 212-234; Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, under *Servus*; Ramsay, *Roman Antiquities*, second edition, p. 94-101, and especially the very excellent treatise, *Die Verhältnisse der Sklaven bei den alten Hebräern nach biblischen und talmudischen Quellen dargestellt*, von Dr. M. Meisner. Kopenhagen, 1859. *יָדָוּ* is not *posse*, *I possessed* (Vulg.), nor *I got* (Auth. Ver.), nor

ich hatte (Luther), but *I bought me* (Coverdale, Herzfeld, Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, &c.), as is evident from Gen. xvii. 12, 13. 23. 27, where *bought servants*, as here, are used in contradistinction to *home-born ones*. *בְּנֵי בֵּית*, *sons of the house*, i. e., home-born servants, is well rendered by the Sept. *οἰκονομοί*; the Vulg. *multamque familiam habui*, which is followed by Luther (*Gesinde*), and Coverdale (*I had a great household*), is incorrect. For the *sing.* *יָדָוּ* construed with the plural noun *בְּנֵי בֵּית*, see i. 10; also Gen. xxvi. 14, xlvii. 17, 18; 2 Chron. xxxii. 20, the only passages where the construction *בְּנֵי בֵּית* *יָדָוּ* is to be found. It seems that *יָדָוּ* here is the *construct*, instead of *יָדָוּ*. For the adverbial use of *יָדָוּ*, see i. 16, where also the usage of the phrase *above all*, i. e., *klings*, is accounted for. *כִּלְכֵּל* stands for *כִּלְכֵּל*, the preposition *ל* is omitted after *כִּלְכֵּל* (*vide infra*, vi. 5. 8, vii. 2, ix. 4, xii. 12).

8. *I amassed me also, &c.* In addition to his numerous herds of cattle, in which the wealth of *people generally* for the most part consisted in ancient times, Coheleth also amassed riches in silver and gold, and treasures *peculiar to kings and kingdoms*. The fleet which Solomon sent to Ophir, manned by the skilful Tyrian mariners, brought him annually between four hundred and twenty and four hundred and fifty talents of gold (1 Kings ix. 26-28); his yearly revenue in gold was six hundred and sixty-six talents (£646,350), besides that which came in from vassal-kings and provinces (1 Kings x. 14, 15), and so great was the quantity of these precious metals which he had, that silver and gold were regarded in Jerusalem as stones (1 Kings x. 27; 2 Chron. i. 15). *יָכַן*, to *heap up*, to *amass*, for the sake of keeping, and not for circulation. *קָנָה* (from *קָנָה*, kindred with *קָנָה*, to *enclose*, to *shut up*), that which is shut up and taken care of,

of kings and kingdoms; I got me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of men, a large number of wives;

a *precious thing*, a *treasure* (comp. my Commentary on the Song of Songs, v. 11). Herzfeld ingeniously accounts for the absence of the article in *מְלָכִים*, *kings*, and its presence before *מְדִינָה*, *kingdom*, because *kings constantly change*, while *countries fixedly abide*. *מְדִינָה* (from *דָּן*, to *subjugate*, to *rule*, to *judge*), that which is governed, a *province*, *land* or *country* (Esth. i. 1, &c.; Ezra, ii. 1; Dan. xi. 24; Lam. i. 1), is a word belonging to later Hebrew. The phrase *treasures of kings and kingdoms* does not mean "the tribute paid to him by kings and kingdoms in treasures" (*נְסִיבֵי מְלָכִים וּמְדִינָה*), but denotes such costly things as are *peculiar to royalty*, in contradistinction to the wealth, consisting in *cattle*, which was common to every *opulent person*.

I got me men-singers, &c. To riches he added the charms and sensuous gratifications which constitute the great delight of men. The Hebrews, from the earliest periods, cultivated the art of music, which they seem to have pursued even in their Egyptian bondage, most probably to beguile many a weary hour, as is evident from Exod. xv. 20, where we find the presence of both vocal and instrumental music immediately after the exodus. How highly susceptible they were of its seductive power, is seen from the soothing effect it produced upon the disturbed mind of Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 10) and Elisha (2 Kings iii. 15), and from its general use in domestic life, at feasts and joyous meetings (Isa. v. 11, 12; Amos vi. 5; Sirach xxxii. 5, 6, xlix. 1). Professional singers of both sexes were employed by David (2 Sam. xix. 36; Sirach ix. 4), and at a later period even foreign women found maintenance among the Hebrews by singing (Isa. xxiii. 16). It was therefore to be expected

that Coheleth, in trying to indulge in all pleasures, would have singers of both sexes. On music among the Hebrews, see Kitto, *Cyclop. Bib. Lit.*; Biner, *Realmoetterbuch*; Saalfeld, *Archäologie der Hebräer*, s. v., *מְדִינָה*, to *do*, when used with regard to human beings, signifies to *get*, to *acquire*, to *procure* (comp. *הָיָה לִי מִן הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי בְּחָרָן*, the men whom I acquired in Haran, Gen. xii. 5). Respecting the etymology and signification of the words *מְדִינָה*, an almost endless variety of opinions has obtained. The ancient versions, deriving it from *מְדִינָה*, to *pour out*, take *מְדִינָה* in the sense of *out-pourers*, and refer it either to *persons* or *things*. Thus the Sept. (*οὐροχόους καὶ οὐροχόους*), and St. Jerome in his commentary (*ministros vini et ministras*), take these words as *men and women-pourers out of wine*, i. e., *cup-bearers*, evidently alluding to the *כַּפְּזִים*, *cup-bearers*, mentioned in 1 Kings x. 5; 2 Chron. ix. 4, whereas Aquila (*κυλικίων καὶ κυλικίων*), Symm. (*κύπελλον καὶ κύπελλον*), the Vulgate (*scyphos et urceos*), the Chaldee (*קַדְרֵי וְקַדְרֵי*), take it for *vessels* which are used for *pouring out liquids*. But against the first interpretation is to be urged, that *cup-bearers* are *only servants*, and as these have already been mentioned in the preceding verse, the repetition of them here would be mere tautology. The second is wholly inapposite, as the last clause of this verse describes *human beings*, and not *things*. What is, however, most subversive of both these renderings is the fact that the words in question are explanatory of the immediately preceding *מְדִינָה*, which refers to *amorous delight* (comp. Song of Songs vii. 7). Equally forcible is this objection to the rendering of the Syriac by *musicians* (*מְדִינָה וְקַדְרֵי*),

9 so that I greatly increased above all that were before me
10 in Jerusalem, my wisdom also standing me by; and nothing
that my eyes desired did I withhold from them; I did not

or musical instruments, (Ibn Melech *קלי וקרי*, which is followed by Luther, Authorised Version, &c.), deriving it from *קָדַח*, to spoil, to ravish, (hence *קָדַח*, a musician, or musical instrument, that ravishes the heart), or splendid and delightful coaches, *palanquins* (הַמְכָבֹּת צִבּוֹר לְהַצָּנֹת הַלְוִי), Rashi and Rashbam, who adduce, in corroboration of this explanation, the Talmudic usage of *קָדַח* in Sabbath (שהו חיה ומל), or great abundance (Paulus, Ewald, Elster, &c.) Ibn Ezra's opinion, therefore, is most natural, that *קָדַח* signifies a wife, a concubine, and it may either be derived, as this learned commentator maintains, from *קָדַח*, to violate, to spoil, to capture, hence a female captured in war, a woman, as women formed the greatest treasures in the spoil of war, and are especially mentioned in the enumeration of the costly and highly prized articles which fell to the lot of the conquerors (Judg. v. 30); these fair captives became the wives or concubines of the warriors (Deut. xxi. 11), or of those to whom they were sold or presented. This derivation is followed by Mendelssohn, Desvieux, Kleuker, Heinemann, Preston, &c. Or *קָדַח* may be deduced from *קָדַח*, *impetum facere in aliquam, comprimere aliquam, concubere cum aliqua* (Prov. xix. 26, xxiv. 15), hence a concubine, so Herzfeld and Philippson. *קָדַח* has a passive signification, according to the analogy of *קָדַח*, spoil, from *קָדַח*, to spoil, *קָדַח*, a purpose, from *קָדַח*, to purpose, &c. The repetition of the same noun in the plural, expresses multitude, (comp. *קָדַח*, a damsel, two damsels, i.e., many damsels, Judg. v. 30; *קָדַח*, generation, generations, i.e., many generations, Ps. lxxii. 5; Gesen. § 108, 4; Ewald, § 313, a). This rendering of *קָדַח* by woman, wife, concubine, which is adopted by most modern commentators (Knobel,

Gesenius, De Wette, Noyes, Heiligstedt, Hitzig, Stuart, &c.), though defending various etymologies, is most compatible with the words *קָדַח*, and is the one most naturally expected, since it would have been surpassing strange that Solomon, who was so enamoured of the fair sex, that he had a thousand wives and concubines (1 Kings xi. 1, &c.), should, as Ibn Ezra rightly remarks, so minutely enumerate his principal pleasures, and entirely omit, in this catalogue, his greatest delight.

9. So that I greatly increased, &c. In verse 4 Coheleth told us that he increased (*הִתְרַבַּח*) his possessions, and now he tells us how he greatly increased (*הִתְרַבַּח*) in riches and fame, through the amassing of such various and costly estates and treasures, effected by the help of wisdom. For the construction of *הִתְרַבַּח*, see *supra*, i. 16. The words *קָדַח* are rendered by the Vulg. *perseveravit mecum*, which Luther, Coverdale, Authorised Version, &c., follow, and which Rashi, Reynolds, Patrick, Knobel, Hitzig, &c., explain, his wisdom was never smothered and suppressed, or undermined in the midst of all those pleasures, so that he always retained the full sense of his position and aim; but this interpretation is too far fetched. The Chaldee explanation (*הִתְרַבַּח*), stood me by, assisted me, which is also the second meaning given by Rashi, and followed by Mendelssohn, Herzfeld, Ewald, Elster, &c., is much more natural (comp. Dan. xii. 1; Esth. viii. 11: ix. 16).

10. And nothing that my eyes desired, &c. The object which he had in view in accumulating all these vast and multifarious estates is here given. It was not to gratify an avaricious propensity, which greedily seeks, grasps, and hoards up every-

keep back my heart from any pleasure, as my heart was to receive happiness from all my toil; and this was to be
11 my portion from all my toil. But when I looked at all my works which my hand worked, and at the toil which I toiled to accomplish them, behold all was vanity and striving after the wind, since there is no advantage under the

thing of value for the sake of the thing, but it was to enable him thereby to gratify every desire and indulge in every pleasure; it was this advantage that he sought to derive from all his toil. *לֹא* expresses the Latin *NULLUS*, nothing. For the ascription of desire to the eye, see *supra*, i. 8. The heart is represented as freely indulging in pleasure, because it has been summoned to do so (i. 16), and because it has been described as having, in the first experiment, devoted itself to the acquisition of wisdom (i. 13). *קָדַח* is masculine, because *קָדַח*, eyes, like all other members of the human body, although usually feminine, are occasionally employed as masculine (Job xxi. 20; Zech. iv. 10; Song of Songs, iv. 9; Gesen. § 107, 4, b; Ewald, § 174, d). The particle *כִּי* assigns a reason why Coheleth did not deny any pleasure to his heart, since he wanted to find that happiness in the pursuit after pleasure, which the pursuit after wisdom had failed to yield. The construction *קָדַח*, though rare, also occurs in Prov. v. 18; 2 Chron. xx. 27. *קָדַח* in such cases designates the source out of which the joy is derived. *קָדַח*, and this, i.e., ability to satisfy the desire of the eyes, and to grant the heart every pleasure, mentioned in the immediately preceding clause, was the portion which he obtained from all his toil. *קָדַח*, labour, is metonymically used for that which is acquired by labour, the fruit of labour, abundance, wealth; so vv. 18 and 19. This seems to be the natural meaning of this clause, though it has occasioned a variety of interpretations. The Vulg. has, *et hanc ratus sum partem meam, si uter labor*

meo, which Luther (und das hielt ich für mein Theil von aller meiner Arbeit) and Coverdale (and this I took for the portion of all my trouble) follow, and which Jermin, Gill, Preston, &c., explain to mean, this temporary enjoyment was all that Solomon desired to obtain, all that he had in view; but this is too harsh an ellipsis. The opinion of Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Reynolds, Patrick, Knobel, Noyes, Elster, &c., that Solomon describes here the inefficiency of all his toil, since it secured for him nothing more than temporary enjoyment, incurs the same objection, as well as anticipates the following verse.

11. But when I looked at all my works, &c. This verse states the conclusion at which Coheleth arrived respecting the power of pleasure, — the second experiment by which he tried to remove depression from his mind, and supply the aching void, — and after the detailed description, substantiates the summary declaration made in verses 1 and 2. All the sumptuous banqueting, the magnificent edifices, the delightful vineyards, parks, and pleasure-grounds, the charming rills, the splendid retinue of servants, the numerous herds, the costly treasures, the enchanting music, the amorous delights, and the complete gratification of every desire, so minutely and forcibly described in 3-10, were utterly insufficient to quiet the mind craving after higher enjoyments, and to secure lasting happiness; and thus the pursuit after pleasure, like wisdom, proved mere vanity and striving after the wind. *קָדַח*, to turn, in order to look, and to look (comp. *קָדַח*, and he shall look upwards, Isa. viii.

12 sun. I then turned to consider wisdom, and madness, and

21); it is used in its primary sense in the next verse; the preposition ב, by which it is followed, indicates that the looking is *minute inspection, examination* (Job vi. 28). The expression נִשְׁעֵי describes the whole of the works, and is designedly chosen because it was used for the entire works at the beginning of this description (*vile supra*, ii. 2). עָמַל designates the *toil* which he had (נִשְׁעֵי) in *accomplishing* these works. For the phrase רָצָה רֵיחַ, *striving after the wind*, see i. 14; and for רִירוֹן, *advantage*, i. 3. לְעֲשֹׂת, *to accomplish*, refers to כָּל מַעֲשֵׂי, *all my works*. The Vulg. renders לְעֲשֹׂת by *frustra*, mistaking it for לְהִלֵּל, *vanity*.

12. *I then turned to consider, &c.* Having shewn that both wisdom (i. 13-18) and pleasure (ii. 1-11) are *alike valueless*, as far as removing mental depression and securing permanent happiness are concerned; and being desirous that this *relative estimate* should not be taken for an *absolute one*, Coheleth now proceeds to shew their respective merits, independent of the use he had tried to make of them. The ability to inquire into and pass judgment upon the intrinsic value of wisdom and folly or pleasure, he claims, upon the ground that he, being so mighty a potentate, had gained, through his extraordinary riches and wisdom, unparalleled experience, which his successors cannot be expected to surpass. That לִימָר here means to *see by comparing*, is evident from the following verse, where the advantage of wisdom over folly is given as the *result* of this *seeing or comparing*. The words הִלְלוֹת וּסְבִלָּו, *madness and folly*, stand for שִׂמְחָה, *pleasure*, which is called קְהָלִי, *foolish actor*, and סְבִלָּו, *folly*, in ii. 1, 2, and are *co-ordinates* with הָכְמָה, *wisdom*; all these three nouns are objects of the action expressed by the verb לִימָר, *to see*. For the phrase *to see wisdom*, *vile supra*, i. 16. The particle כִּי is *usual*, assigning a *reason* for the

preceding statement. The words קִהָּ הָאִישׁ, *what is the man?* as Ibn Ezra rightly remarks, imply a kind of undervaluing the person (comp. Ps. viii. 4). The accusative אִישׁ, *whom*, depends upon עֲשִׂוּ, *they have made*, i. e., *who has been made*; the third person plural, here with a pleonastic suffix, which is also found in vii. 13, like the third person singular, is as frequently used for the impersonal or the passive (comp. i. 10; Gen. xi. 9; Gesen. § 137, 3; Ewald, § 282). The interrogative is used for a strong negation (i. e., "he will not be greater and have more experience than I," comp. i. 3; Gen. xxx. 2; Gesen. § 153, 2; Ewald, § 324, b). Simple as this strictly grammatical explanation seems to be, yet few verses in this book have been more variously interpreted than the one before us; almost every word has been altered, or had some unnatural meaning forced upon it, either by the ancient versions or modern commentators. The first clause has only suffered from the Chaldee, which has מְדִינָתָא וּמְלִיכָתָא וּסְבִלָּו, *government of the kingdom and understanding*, instead of הִלְלוֹת וּסְבִלָּו, *madness and folly*. Jerome, in his commentary, takes the words וּסְבִלָּו וּקְהָלִי, *madness and folly*, as a mere addition to הָכְמָה, *wisdom*, to shew that what man can attain has more madness and folly in it than true wisdom (*plus erroris stultitiæque habere quam veræ certæque prudentiæ*); somewhat similar, Hitzig and Stuart, *wisdom, even madness and folly*; and Mendelssohn, who explains it, "And I turned from looking for prosperity and happiness in all the works of madness and folly, though they be done scientifically." As the Chaldee is an unwarranted alteration, we shall pass it by, and notice the violent constructions of Jerome, and we submit—1. That such an antithesis would require נִבָּ וְזֶה, *even this*, or זֶה, *behold*, before הִלְלוֹת וּקְהָלִי, *madness and folly*, and no brachyology or pathos could occa-

folly; for what is the man that will come after the king.

sion the omissions. 2. That Coheleth nowhere calls absolute wisdom *folly*. 3. That it contradicts the immediately following verse. 4. That this violent construction is contrary to the scope of the passage, and has arisen from missing the thread of connection between this verse and the preceding statement, overlooking that Coheleth, having placed the *relative value* of wisdom and folly upon the same scale, is here evidently trying to shew their *absolute worth*. The ancient versions, the Jewish commentators, and the vast majority of modern expositors are therefore right in following the natural construction, and regarding all the three words as *objects* of the action expressed by the verb. Hitzig's argument, which is magnified by Stuart, that the common exegesis is a mere repetition of what was proposed in i. 17, falls to the ground, since it is based upon a misunderstanding of the design of this verse.

What is the man, &c. It is this part of the verse which has been so differently treated both by the ancient versions and modern expositors. The Sept., following a traditional explanation of הָכְמָה, and altering some of the other words, has ὅτι τίς ἀνθρώπος ἐπιλείσται ὅπως τῆς βουλῆς τὰ ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ, *for what man will follow after counsel as far as they use it?* The Vulgate, adhering more closely to the Midrash, and omitting the words אִישׁ, and altering עֲשִׂוּ, the third person plural, into עֲשֵׂה, *his maker*, has: QUID EST, INQUAM, HOMO, UT SEQUI POSSIT REGEM FACTOREM EUM? *what is man, said I, that he can follow the King his Maker!* Gussetius, however, who also espouses this Midrashic view, prefers retaining the verb עֲשִׂוּ, in order to obtain an argument for the Trinity, since, according to him, this plural verb refers to הָכְמָה, *the King of Kings*. The Chaldee paraphrase, of course, gives the tradition in full,

כִּי הִנֵּה אִישׁ לִנְבִי לְעֹלָמָה בְּתֵר גִּידָה מְלָכָא וּבְתֵר סִרְעֻנִּיָּתָא קִרָּא נְכִי אֲחִינוּרָה מְלֹוִי וְהָאֵלֶּיךָ לֵיהּ, *what use is it for a man to pray after the decrees of the King, and after the sentence which has long been passed concerning him, and has been executed upon him?* which Rashi and Rashbam follow. Coverdale has, *for what is he among men that might be compared to me the king in such works?* We must not pause to animadvert upon these traditional explanations and textual emendations, as they are contrary to the laws of exegesis; we pass on to those who adhere to the received text, and base their various interpretations thereupon. Ibn Ezra explains it, כִּי מִה יִבְלֵה חֲדָה בְּאִרְם שִׁיבָא אַחֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכִי, *for what power will the man have who will come after the king? all that he will do, others have done long ago*; so also Philippson. Or, which is substantially the same, *for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done*; so the Auth. Version, Mendelssohn, Reynolds, Desvieux, Knobel, De Wette, Noyes, Preston, Hitzig, Stuart, &c. (only that the last two, compelled by their misinterpretations of the first clause, alter עֲשִׂוּ, the third person plural, into עֲשֵׂה, the inf. const. with the final ה omitted, thus obtaining the sense, *he shall do what long ago was his (the king's) doing*), and which H. Michaelis, Knobel, &c., explain, *what will my successor to the throne do? he will do that which others have done long before him*. But against this is to be urged 1. That the supplying of the verb עֲשֵׂה in the second clause, or between כִּי and הָכְמָה is an exceedingly harsh ellipsis, and, even if it could be shewn that it ever takes place, which is very questionable, ought not to be resorted to unless absolutely necessary, which, however, is not the case here. 2. This objection becomes still more formidable, by making the accusative אִישׁ depend upon this im-

13 who has been made long ago? and I saw that there is an advantage to wisdom over folly, as is the advantage of light

plied verb. 9. It is evident from *אחרי*, after, which refers to the king's successors to the throne (*vide infra*, ver. 18), that *כִּי* is predicated of royalty. The interpretation of Ibn Ezra, referring *אחרי* to a private man, contrasted with the king, which most modern commentators follow, incurs the additional censure that it forces upon the term *אֲדָמָה* the sense *plebeian* or *civilian*, in contradistinction to *מֶלֶךְ*, king, which it never has, and that, on the contrary, the article before it shews that it refers to a specific individual, the king's successor, i. e., *he who comes after him*. Greater still are the objections against Jermin; for *what is that man who shall attain after the king, to that which they have already made him?* which he explains, "to that which wisdom, and the knowledge of madness and folly have made him;" and Holden, "for what, O man, shall come after the king? anything perfectly new? no; only that which hath been already done; and therefore I am well qualified to form a correct judgment respecting them." And what shall we say to Herzfeld's explanation, who maintains that in the words "wisdom, and madness, and folly," Solomon contrasts himself with the world at large; he is *wisdom personified*, and the rest of the world *madness and folly*; to justify this, Solomon asks, *for what is the man who comes after the king? i. e., who surely is behind the royal sage?* and answers, *what has been done long ago, i. e., acknowledged fruitless exertions, folly; this is, as it were, the whole man, and constitutes his being?* Could it have been believed that so excellent a Hebrew scholar would force such an obscurity upon the text? Ewald, Heiligstedt, and Elster, feeling the objections against supplying the verb *עָשָׂה*, and the harsh construction necessarily arising from this proceeding, translate this

verse, *and I turned to see wisdom, and madness, and folly, what the man will be that shall follow the king, compared with him who has been chosen long ago*. But against this is the particle *כִּי*, which by no means admits of *אחרי*, being dependent upon *אֲדָמָה*, to say nothing of the unnecessary and forced meaning assigned to *כִּי* and *אחרי*, when the legitimate signification yields good sense.

13. *And I saw that there is an advantage to wisdom, &c.* The comparison instituted in the last verse as to the merits of absolute wisdom and folly is here brought to an issue, and the verdict is given in favour of the former. However true that wisdom, when acquired, to remove by its power the depression caused by the contemplation of the fact that, while the world and natural objects abide and constantly return to their wonted actions, man has no abiding place here, never returns when once gone; that wisdom, when obtained to ameliorate by its laws the condition of man and secure permanent happiness, only increases our disappointment and pain in proportion to the amount we acquire for that purpose (*vide supra*, i. 18); yet, considering it *absolutely*, independent of the use Coheleth has tried to make of it in the passage alluded to, who, that has been constrained with the sacred writer to denounce it as "striving after the wind," as a canker growing in us with the growth of wisdom, will not also award the palm to wisdom *when compared with folly?* Instead, therefore, of contradicting each other, as some have vainly maintained, these two statements are perfectly harmonious. The cultivation of the mind is far more exalting, delightful, and exquisite to a rational being, than the indulgence of the passions in degrading, enervating, and poignant pleasures. Wisdom, therefore, like

14 over darkness. The wise man, his eyes are in his head, while the fool walks in blindness, and yet I knew that the

splendid and genial light, illuminates and quickens everything around it; whilst folly, like brooding and lifeless darkness, leaves gloom and depression in its train. It is on this account that wise precepts are frequently called *light* (Ps. cxix. 105; Prov. vi. 23), and ignorance is termed *darkness* (Job xxxviii. 19). For *אֵינִי רֹאֶה* see *supra*, i. 3. For *כִּי* see Gesen. § 119, 1. *אֵינִי רֹאֶה* in the last clause stands for *אֵינִי רֹאֶה*, the vowel *i* belonging to the feeble letter is not unfrequently transferred to the preceding consonant (comp. *אֵינִי רֹאֶה* for *אֵינִי רֹאֶה*, Jerm. xxv. 36; Gesen. § 24, 1; Ewald, § 34, 10). The Chaldee, desirous of magnifying wisdom to the utmost, has paraphrased it to the effect, *אֵינִי רֹאֶה אֶת חֹמֶת הַחֲכָמִים* *אֵינִי רֹאֶה אֶת חֹמֶת הַחֲכָמִים*, the superiority of wisdom over folly, is greater than the superiority of the light of the day over the darkness of the night.

14. *The wise man, his eyes, &c.* Light and darkness, used in the preceding verse to shew the superiority of wisdom over folly in the abstract, have suggested in this verse the figurative use of *open and closed eyes*, to illustrate these qualities as manifest in the concrete; in the circumspect, reflecting, and heedful conduct of the wise man, and the indiscreet, unreflecting, and heedless dealings of the fool. *אֵינִי רֹאֶה* stands *absolutely* for the sake of prominence (comp. *אֵינִי רֹאֶה* *אֵינִי רֹאֶה*, God, perfect is his way, Ps. xviii. 30; Gesen. § 145, 2). The words *אֵינִי רֹאֶה*, *his eyes are in his head*, i. e., has them in their useful place, are tantamount to *אֵינִי רֹאֶה*, *are open*, as is evident from the antithesis, *אֵינִי רֹאֶה* *אֵינִי רֹאֶה*, and the fool walks in blindness; *אֵינִי רֹאֶה*, to be dark, to be dim, is frequently used to denote the dimness of sight (*vide infra*, xii. 3; Ps. lxix. 23; Lam. v. 17). *To have one's eyes open* is a well known phrase for a wise and watchful man (comp. *אֵינִי רֹאֶה* *אֵינִי רֹאֶה*, bribery blinds the open-

eyes, Exod. xxiii. 8 with Deut. xvi. 19, where *אֵינִי רֹאֶה* is exchanged for *אֵינִי רֹאֶה*, the eyes of the wise; but especially Prov. xx. 13, where open eyes, as here, are contrasted with sleep-closed ones).

And yet I knew, &c. But, nevertheless, this superiority cannot obviate the fact stated in i. 3. 11. 18; the wise man cannot devise anything to exempt him from the fate common to all, the contemplation of which so much distresses Coheleth; the wise man and the fool must die alike. The particle *אֲכִלָּכִי* is frequently used *adversatively*, for *yet, notwithstanding, nevertheless* (comp. *infra*, vi. 7; Ps. cxxix. 2; Ezek. xvi. 28; Gesen. Lex. s. v. 4; Ewald, § 354, a). For the pleonastic use of *אֲכִלָּכִי*, I, after *אֲכִלָּכִי*, with the pronominal suffix, see i. 16. *אֲכִלָּכִי* (from *אֲכִלָּכִי*, to meet, to happen, to befall), that which befalls, hap, fate, destiny, event, and refers here to death, which is the burden of the sacred writer. In consequence of the poverty of the Hebrew language, the cardinal *אֲכִלָּכִי* is used in this book in at least six different significations, each of which is expressed by a different word in Latin—1. In its primary sense as cardinal, *אֲכִלָּכִי*, one (vii. 28, ix. 18). 2. Indef. *אֲכִלָּכִי*, *אֲכִלָּכִי* (iv. 8). 3. ALTER (iv. 10); 4. SOLUS (iv. 9. 10); 5. UNICUS (iv. 11); and 6. IDEM, the same (ii. 14; iii. 19. 20; vi. 6; ix. 2. 3; xii. 11, and in the passage before us). *אֲכִלָּכִי*, all of them, denotes also both, as is evident from the two nouns, viz. *אֲכִלָּכִי*, the wise man, and *אֲכִלָּכִי*, the fool, to which it refers. It is probably used instead of *אֲכִלָּכִי*, both, because these two classes constitute all mankind. For the same reason *אֲכִלָּכִי*, all, is often used for both, (*vide infra*, iii. 19. 20; vi. 6; vii. 15; ix. 1, 2; x. 19; and comp. the well-known Talmudic phrase *אֲכִלָּכִי*, *אֲכִלָּכִי*, although referring to two persons). Hence the Vulg., though

17 how dieth the wise, like the fool! Therefore I hated life, for an evil pressure was upon me, the work which I worked under the sun, as all is vanity and striving after the wind;

lxxiii. 19; Isa. xiv. 4), and is well explained by Rashbam, *אין הוא רב, המחקים*; whereas the Auth. Version (and how dieth the wise man? as the fool), influenced by the traditional explanation of this clause, has departed from the simple meaning of the words. *במה*, the imperfect, like the participle in the preceding clause, denotes *continuance*. The Chaldee, anxious to make also this verse orthodox, paraphrases it, *אדם לא ידענה להימית עם שומא לעלמא דאחי* וכו' *מיתח בגרא מה דהוה קבר ביומיה פו יחנן יומיה דעתידין לכהו' בתריות בולא אשחוקא ואיכדין ייכדין גני אנשא דהיא סופא דצדיקא נכוסא דחנא, because the remembrance of the wise man is not with the fool in the world to come; and after the death of a man, that which has been in his days long ago, so it will be in the days that will come after him, all will be disclosed; and how then say the sons of men that the end of the righteous is the same as the end of the wicked?* This Midrashic interpretation, which is given by Rashi, has as usual been adopted by Christian Fathers. Thus St. Gregory of Nyssa, who takes the statement in verses 14 and 15 as an objection urged by a sceptic, affirms that the sacred writer denounces it with the words, "*this, too, is vanity*," and corroborates this denunciation by asserting, in the verse before us, that the remembrance of the wise man is not with the fool for ever; though they both die alike, their end is not alike; and by asking, "*How dieth the wise man? as the fool?*" which he explains, how therefore does any one say that the one dies like the other?

17. *Therefore I hated life, &c.* The fact that a life spent in toiling to acquire wisdom has no advantage whatever over a life wasted in frenzied folly, as far as the problem of Coheleth is concerned, produced in him

weariness of an existence pregnant with the consciousness of its certain, speedy, and gloomy dissolution, which became more poignant at every fruitless effort to avert it. Of course this refers to the state of life described in the preceding part of this treatise, when Coheleth sought to find by the aid of wisdom a satisfactory solution of the problems of life. We should have deemed it superfluous to make this remark, had not the Hagadiah interpretation, in its anxiety to make the sentiment of this verse strictly orthodox, strangely perverted the meaning of the text, and had not that perverse exposition been adopted by the ancient versions and Fathers, and followed by some modern commentators. Thus the Chaldee paraphrases it *אדם לא ידענה להימית עם שומא לעלמא דאחי* וכו' *מיתח בגרא מה דהוה קבר ביומיה פו יחנן יומיה דעתידין לכהו' בתריות בולא אשחוקא ואיכדין ייכדין גני אנשא דהיא סופא דצדיקא נכוסא דחנא, because the remembrance of the wise man is not with the fool in the world to come; and after the death of a man, that which has been in his days long ago, so it will be in the days that will come after him, all will be disclosed; and how then say the sons of men that the end of the righteous is the same as the end of the wicked?* This Midrashic interpretation, which is given by Rashi, has as usual been adopted by Christian Fathers. Thus St. Gregory of Nyssa, who takes the statement in verses 14 and 15 as an objection urged by a sceptic, affirms that the sacred writer denounces it with the words, "*this, too, is vanity*," and corroborates this denunciation by asserting, in the verse before us, that the remembrance of the wise man is not with the fool for ever; though they both die alike, their end is not alike; and by asking, "*How dieth the wise man? as the fool?*" which he explains, how therefore does any one say that the one dies like the other?

17. *Therefore I hated life, &c.* The fact that a life spent in toiling to acquire wisdom has no advantage whatever over a life wasted in frenzied folly, as far as the problem of Coheleth is concerned, produced in him

18 and I hated all my gain which I gained under the sun, as I must leave it to the man who shall come after me, and 19 no one knoweth whether he will be a wise man or a fool, and yet he shall have power over all my gain which I have

the work, i. e., the toil of men (vide supra, i. 14).

18. *And I hated all my gain, &c.* The weariness of life expressed in the preceding verse, is now followed by deploring all his works, which have not only utterly failed to satisfy the cravings of the soul, but which he cannot even bequeath to his own offspring, but must leave to a stranger. For the pleonastic use of the pron. *אני*, I, after the verb, with the pronominal suffix, see i. 16. *עמל, labour, toil*, is, in this and in the two following verses, used metonymically for the fruit of labour or toil, gain, riches, possessions, which alone can be inherited; Rashbam, therefore, rightly remarks, *אח עמל מה עשר*. The verbal adjective, *עמל*, obtains the force of a participle, by virtue of the pronoun added to it, and hence is followed by an accusative, and stands for the present tense (*vide infra*, 22; iii. 9; iv. 8; ix. 9). *אחי* is not from *אח* (Knobel) but from *אח*, like the forms *אחי*, to despise (Lam. i. 8), from *אח*, to despise (Prov. iv. 21), from *אח*, to incite (Jer. xxxviii. 22), from *אח*; this Hiphil has a short vowel under the preformative, followed by *Dagesh forte* (Gesen. § 72, Rem. 9; Ewald, § 122, e). The phrase *אחי אחי*, who shall be after me? is the same as *אחי אחי*, who shall come after the king? in ver. 12, and precludes the possibility of referring it to Coheleth's own son, as is evident from the expression *אחי*, which could not be used to designate a child; and especially from the following verse, and verse 21. The strange rendering of the Vulgate, *rusus detestatus sum omnem industriam meam, qua sub sole studiosissime laboravi, habiturus heredem post me, again I detested all my industry wherewith I most studiously laboured*

under the sun, being likely to have an heir after me, which has led some to regard this statement as expressing a querulous and mean selfishness, begrudging his heir the possession of the accumulated property; as well as the more softened paraphrase of the Chaldee, *אדם לא ידענה להימית עם שומא לעלמא דאחי* וכו' *מיתח בגרא מה דהוה קבר ביומיה פו יחנן יומיה דעתידין לכהו' בתריות בולא אשחוקא ואיכדין ייכדין גני אנשא דהיא סופא דצדיקא נכוסא דחנא, because I must leave it to Rehoboam my son, who will come after me, and Jeroboam his servant will come and take out of his hand the ten tribes, and possess half of the kingdom*, referring it to Rehoboam, which Rashi, Knobel, and many others follow, are both against the words of the text, and contrary to the character of Coheleth, who shews tender and fatherly feelings (iv. 8; v. 13). Orientals, to the present day, have the welfare of their children too much at heart to give vent to such mean selfishness. Jermin's explanation of this verse is really a curiosity: "It is commanded of God in the law of Moses (Levit. xi. 41) 'every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth shall be an abomination unto thee;' and what is all man's labour concerning the things of this life but a creeping thing on the earth? Wherefore Solomon might well say, 'I hated all my labour.'"

19. *And no one knoweth, &c.* And what is still more galling, is the fact that this stranger, to whom all the property, so wisely and prudently acquired, is to be left, may, for aught Coheleth knows, be a fool, and imprudently and wantonly squander all. This declaration about his ignorance of the character of the individual who is to be his heir, yields

man than to eat and drink, and let his soul enjoy pleasure in

nothing left for man but calmly and cheerfully to enjoy the present; yet this, too, he finds is not always in the power of man. Much difficulty has been experienced in the rendering of the first part of this verse. The Sept. translates it, οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγαθὸν ἀνθρώπου, ὃ φάγεται καὶ πίνει καὶ ὃ δείξει τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτοῦ ἀγαθὸν ἐν μίσχῳ αὐτοῦ, *man has not the good which he shall eat and drink, and which he shall shew his soul as good in his labour*; substantially the same. Geier, Dathe, and Knobel, sein Glück (wird) durch den Menschen, daß er esse und trinke und seine Seele Glück schauen lasse bei seiner Mühe; Mendelssohn, Friedländer, and Preston, *it is no great good for a man to eat and drink and enjoy himself in his employment*; Desvieux, *no good in man that he eateth and drinketh, and maketh his soul see good in his labour*; Rosenmüller, Herzfeld, and Philippon; nicht in des Menschen Befähigung liegt es, daß er esse und trinke und seine Seele Gutes genießen lasse für alle seine Mühe. But against these renderings is to be urged, that they are contrary to the scope of the whole argument. Coheleth having shewn the utter vanity of all exertions to secure abiding good, evidently intends to prove that enjoyment of the present is the only good thing left for man; the contrast between this clause and the preceding verse puts this beyond the shadow of a doubt. Moreover, these renderings are against iii. 12. 22; v. 17; viii. 15; ix. 7-9, where the same or similar language is employed to recommend present enjoyment as the best thing for man. The Vulg., feeling this difficulty, has rendered it interrogatively, NONNE MELIUS EST COMEDERE ET BIBERE ET CISTERE ANIMÆ SUE BONA DE LABORIBUS SUI? *is it not better to eat and drink, and to shew his soul the good things of his labours?* so also Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, Hodgson, Boothroyd, Hengstenberg, &c.

But though this rendering gives the sense of the passage, yet the difficulty of assigning to מִן here an interrogative meaning in the face of the similar phrase מִן סוּב, in iii. 12. 22; viii. 15, &c., as well as the awkwardness of an interrogative sentence in this connection, will always be against it. The rendering of the Syr.

כִּי לֹא מִן חַיִּיטָא אֶלָּא בְּנִפְשָׁא

there is nothing good for man except to eat, &c., the Chaldee לֹא מִן חַיִּיטָא אֶלָּא בְּנִפְשָׁא, St. Jerome, *non est bonum homini, nisi quod comedit, &c.*, Rashbam and Ibn Ezra, which is followed by the Geneva and Auth. Versions, De Wette, Ewald, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, &c., is the most preferable. A comparison of this clause with iii. 12 will shew that the מ, which this rendering supplies before מִן, has been dropped in transcribing, because the word which immediately precedes it ends with מ. For a similar instance, where the meeting of the same letter has been the cause of the dropping of one, see Job xxxiii. 17. The א before מִן, as well as in iii. 12, has the same signification as the ל in vi. 12; viii. 15; allied to this is the use of the א, to denote the object in doing a thing = *for*, in x. 17. נִרְאִיתִי אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי מִן, stands for נִרְאִיתִי אֶת־יְהוָה, by an attraction which takes the subject of the dependent clauses into the governing one as the object; this takes place especially after verbs of observing, knowing, shewing, or declaring (compare אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים בְּרִסְבֹּת הָאֵלֹהִים, and God saw the light that it was good, instead of אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים בְּרִסְבֹּת הָאֵלֹהִים, and God saw that the light was good, Gen. i. 4, vi. 2, xlix. 15; Exod. xxxii. 22; 1 Kings v. 17; comp. also Mark xi. 32, xii. 34; Acts iii. 10; Ewald, § 336, b; Winer, § 66, b). Not perceiving this construction, which is of very frequent occurrence in this book (iii. 21; v. 19; viii. 17:

25 his labour; even this I saw cometh from God: for who should

xi. 8), expositors have found great difficulty in explaining these passages, and have often obscured the sense, which is obvious enough when the attraction is solved.

25. *For who should eat, &c.* The two assertions made in the preceding verse, viz., that the best thing for man is to enjoy the fruit of his labour, and that this enjoyment is a gift of God, are now accounted for in this and the following verses. "Nothing is better for man than to enjoy his labours, for who except the labourer (חֹרֵץ קִמְצֵי) has the first claim to do so? To render this statement more striking and vivid, Coheleth places himself in the position of the labourer, and says, "If I toil, who should enjoy the fruit of my toil more than I?" A similar instance occurs in iv. 8. So Rashi מִי רָאִי לֵאמֹל אֲנִי יִמְצֵי מִי רָאִי יִסְדֵּר לְבִלְעָה מְבֻלְעִי, וְכִי יִסְדֵּר לְבִלְעָה מְבֻלְעִי, *who is entitled to eat my labours, and who should hasten to partake of them, except I?* Rashbam *הֲלֹא לְמֹדֵד לֵאמֹל לְמֹדֵד שֶׁהוּא מִי הוּא שֶׁהוּא מְבֻלְעִי וְעַל כֵּן יֵשׁ לֵאמֹל וְלִשְׂמֹחַ בְּעַמְלִי מְבֻלְעִי בְּכֹמֶל, וְלִשְׂמֹחַ בְּכֹמֶל לְמֹדֵד, for who is entitled to eat and hasten to rejoice in my toil, except I? therefore man (the labourer) should eat and drink and rejoice in his labour, and Ibn Ezra דָּוִד מִי שֶׁהוּא רָאִי לֵאמֹל אֲנִי כְמוֹנִי, *is there any one so entitled to eat it as I am?* This appears to be the most natural explanation, and most consonant with the scope of the passage. Others, however, maintain that this verse contains a proof, from Solomon's personal experience, of the assertion made in the latter part of the preceding verse, viz., that the enjoyment of things is a gift of God, and explain it, "Who shall eat, or who shall drink, more than I? no one! and if I, abounding in all good things more than any one (ii. 1-10) found that it was not in my power to enjoy them (ii. 2-11) surely the ability to enjoy the fruits of our labour must be from God" (Luther, Mendelssohn, Herzfeld), or "I who have so richly enjoyed life can testify*

from my own experience, that it is a gift of God" (Patrick, Knobel, Hengstenberg, &c.) But the very fact that, according to these explanations, this verse simply raises a question without furnishing us with the clue for its solution, and that these diametrically opposite interpretations are therefore to be urged with equal right, shews the preferableness of the view we advocate. St. Jerome, again, who is followed by Coverdale, Desvieux, Spohn, Ewald, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Philippon, Elster, Vaihinger, &c., renders this verse, QUIS ENIM COMEDIT, ET QUIS PARCIT SINE ILLO, QUI HOMINI BONO CORAM SE DEDIT? *for who eats, and who forbears it without him, who gives to the man that is good in his sight?* But this alteration of קִמְצֵי, the first person, into קִמְצֵי, the third person, is both unnecessary and unwarranted. The appeal to the Sept. and Syriac is nugatory, for these ancient versions may simply have resolved the figure by which Coheleth places himself in the position of the labourer, and refer direct to the labourer, which is also done by Ibn Ezra, when explaining it (כי מי יאכל ממנו לגר ממנו). This is corroborated by the fact that the ancient Latin version, which is retained in the Vulgate, has *ut ego*, the first person. וְ, *causal*, assigns a reason for the first statement made in the foregoing verse. The interrogative כי is used as an emphatic denial, *vide supra*, i. 3. וְהֵא, *to hasten*, is of frequent occurrence in the Old Test., and is used with other verbs or nouns, to intensify their meaning (comp. Ps. xxii. 20; cxix. 60); the full construction would be יֵאָכֵל וְיֵשְׂתֶּה; hence Symmachus' rendering of וְיֵשְׂתֶּה by ἀναλίσσει, *shall consume*; the text, however, by leaving the verb to be mentally supplied from the first clause, renders the construction more forcible. A similar instance of וְיֵשְׂתֶּה being construed with אָכַל, is to be found in

26 eat, and who should hasten thereunto, except I? For to the man who is good before him, he giveth wisdom, and knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner he giveth the business to gather and to amass, to give it to him who

Hab. i. 8, *כְּנֶשֶׁר חָסָה לֶאֱכֹל*, like an eagle hasting to eat. So Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Geneva, and Auth. Version. The Septuagint *πύται*, and the Syriac

ܠܥܠܐ, shall drink, has evidently arisen from a desire to make it conform with the preceding verse. Aquila *φύται*, and Jerome *PAROIT*, confounding *יָדָה* with the assonant *יָדָה*, is undoubtedly owing to a conceit of making this clause an antithesis to the former, i. e., who shall eat, and who shall refrain from eating, or not eat it? The Vulgate *DELICIOUS AFFLUET*, shall abound with delights, which is followed by Luther (*reich ergötzt*), Knobel, Gesenius, Herzfeld, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Philippson, Fürst, Elster, &c., who try to justify it by appealing to the Aramean or Mishnaic usage of this word, is contrary to its uniform signification in the Old Testament, and is rendered nugatory by the passage in Hab. quoted above. *חוץ מן*, except, which occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament, is a well-known Talmudic phrase (comp. *הכל בדי שמים חוץ מירא*, *everything is from God, except the fear of God*, i. e., man is a free agent; God, who gives him every blessing, does not make him religious; Berach. 32, 2. 71; Nidah, 16, 72; comp. also *מצוה שהיא חלויה בארץ אינה חוץ מן הערלה וכלאים*, *all the commandments which are local (for Palestine) are not to be practised but in the land, except circumcision and the sowing of diverse seed* (Kid. 1. 9, see also Middoth, 2, 3).

26. *For to the man, &c.* The second assertion, made in the latter part of verse 24, is now substantiated. Having had more wisdom, knowledge, and enjoyment than any one else (i. 16, &c.), and having received these as a gift from the Lord,

who was pleased with him (1 Kings iv. 12, 13), Coheleth can therefore testify, from his own experience, that these blessings are bestowed by God on the righteous, and are withheld from the wicked. Whilst the spiritual capacities are described as being communicated directly from the Lord, the earthly materials are given to us through the medium of men, whom God uses as instruments to effect his great purposes. The wicked are also represented as amassing wealth for the righteous, in Job. xxvii. 13-17; Prov. xiii. 22; xxviii. 8. *בְּ*, causal, for, introduces the reason for the second assertion, viz., that the capacity to enjoy earthly possessions (*מִדַּת הָאֱלֹהִים*) is from God; the intimate connection of this statement, with the reason given for it in the verse before us, is evident from the pronoun in *לְקַיֵּי*, which refers to *הָאֱלֹהִים*, God, in ver. 24. b. Herzfeld will not admit that *חֹסֵד וְיָרֵם* and *חֹסֵד וְיָרֵם* have any reference to the moral character of the individuals thus described; *חֹסֵד*, he says, *begehrt einen, der die Gnade Gottes verfehlt, ihrer nicht theilhaftig wird*; Herzfeld, therefore, makes this verse to set forth God's arbitrary granting or withholding the power of enjoying earthly good, as he likes or dislikes any one, irrespective of his moral worth. But vii. 26, and especially viii. 12, 13, where the same two characters are contrasted, and where *חֹסֵד* is defined by *אִישׁ רָע*, *an evil-doer*, and *חֹסֵד וְיָרֵם*, *one who does not fear God*, are subversive of this interpretation. The Vulgate's paraphrase of *חֹסֵד וְיָרֵם*, *PECCATORI AUTEM DEDIT AFFLICTIONEM ET CURAM SUPERFLUAM*, but to the sinner he has given vexation and superfluous care, is both an unwarranted departure from the text, and does not at all improve the sense.

is good before God. This, too, is vanity, and striving after the wind.

This, too, is vanity, &c., i. e., this wisdom, knowledge, and joy, are utterly unable to satisfy the mind, which is disturbed by the contemplation of the fact, that whilst all the objects of nature are abiding, man vanishes and is buried in oblivion. That *חֹסֵד וְיָרֵם* refers to *חֹסֵד וְיָרֵם* is evident, from the fact that these are the very things, and the very

words, which Coheleth has already characterised as vain, and unable to secure for him lasting good, in i. 16; ii. 1. Thus Coheleth concludes the first portion of his enquiry, by shewing that wisdom, knowledge, and enjoyment of earthly blessings, which are the best things for short-lived man, cannot satisfy the cravings of the human soul.

SECTION II.

CHAPTER III. 1—V. 19.

All the events of life are immutably fixed (1-8), hence the fruitlessness of human labour (9). God has indeed prescribed bounds to man's employment, in harmony with this fixed order of things, but man through his ignorance often mistakes it (10, 11); thus again shewing that there is nothing left for man but the enjoyment of the things of this world in his possession, and that even this is a gift of God (12, 13). The cause of this immutable arrangement in the events of life is, that man may fear God, and feel that it is he who orders all things (14, 15). The apparent success of wickedness (16) does not militate against this conclusion (17); but even if, as is affirmed, all terminates *here*, and man and beast have the same destiny (18-21), this shews all the more clearly that there is nothing left for man but to enjoy life, since this is his only portion (22). The state of suffering (iv. 1), however, according to this view, becomes desperate, and death, and not to have been born at all, are preferable to life (2, 3). The exertions made, in spite of the prescribed order of things, often arise from jealousy (4), and fail in their end (5, 6), or are prompted by avarice (7, 8), and defeat themselves (9-16). Since all things are thus under the control of an omnipotent God, we ought to serve him acceptably (17-v. 6), trust to his protection under oppression (7, 8), remember that the rich oppressor, after all, has not even the comfort of the poor labourer (9-11), and that he often brings misery upon his children and himself (12-16). These considerations, therefore, again shew that there is nothing left for man but to enjoy life the few years of his existence, being the gift of God (17-19).

iii. 1 There is a fixed time for all things, and an appointed
2 season for all undertakings under heaven; a time to be
born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck

1. *There is a fixed time, &c.* Having shewn, in the preceding section, that neither wisdom nor pleasure can avert the gloomy fate of man, and that enjoyment, the only thing left for man under these circumstances, is utterly insufficient to cheer his dejected mind, Coheleth now shews that industry, another favourite experiment which is frequently made, is equally fruitless in its efforts to alter this state of things. All the events of life are permanently fixed (1-8), and hence the abortiveness of human labour (9). That לָלֵךְ, *to all*, does not refer to the *rerum creaturarum universitas* (Geier, Rosenmüller, &c.), but to the affairs of human life (comp. i. 2 with 14), is evident from the second clause, where נָתַן is added to determine its meaning, as well as from the sequel, which enumerates some of the things denoted thereby. וְכֵן (from וָכֵן, *to number, to measure, to determine, to fix*), a fixed time (וְכֵן וְכֵן, Rashi, Ibn Ezra), is a word belonging to later Hebrew, and is used for the earlier expression נָתַן; it only occurs in Nehem. ii. 6; Esth. ix. 27, 31; and in Chaldee, Dan. ii. 16, 21; iii. 7, 8; iv. 33; vi. 11; vii. 12, 22, 25; Ezra v. 3. Gesenius' explanation of וְכֵן לָלֵךְ by *cuique rei tempus certum quoddam, i. e., nihil est quod perpetuitate gaudeat, omnia fluxa sunt et caduca* (Thesa. and Lex., s. v., וְכֵן), is against the scope of the passage, which is not to describe the frailty and fleetness of all things, but, on the contrary, the immutable fixedness of the things to be mentioned. The meaning of נָתַן must of course be determined by וְכֵן. וְכֵן (from וָכֵן, *to incline, to bend, to desire*), prop. *desire*, metonymically the object one desires, anything for which we strive,

business, undertaking. So ܐܬܝܢܐ, *business, undertaking, thing*, in Syriac,

from ܐܬܝܢܐ, *to desire*, and ܐܬܝܢܐ or ܐܬܝܢܐ, *a thing, a matter*, in Chaldee (comp. Dan. iv. 14, &c.), from ܐܬܝܢܐ, *to ask, to desire*. The word is therefore well rendered by the Septuagint πρᾶγμα, and Symmachus χρεῖα. The Vulgate's rendering of this clause by ET SUI SPATII TRANSEUNT UNIVERSA SUB CŒLO, and in their periods all things pass under heaven, is a lame paraphrase. Still more objectionable is Desvieux's version, "all the determinations of man's will under heaven have their proper time."

2. *A time to be born, &c.* Coheleth begins his series of proofs in illustration of the general proposition made in the foregoing verse, by referring to the commencement and end of life. Both the hour of our birth and of our death are preordained by a power over which we have no control, and no exertion on our part can hasten on the fixed time to be born, or delay the appointed day of death. The preposition ִי, prefixed to the infinitives in this enumeration, gives them the force of the Latin Gerund (comp. Gesen. § 45, 3; Ewald, § 292, b). The Septuagint, the Chaldee, Gesenius (Lex., s. v.), Knobel, Herzfeld, Hitzig, Philippson, Stuart, &c., take ִי in its usual active meaning, *giving birth*; but the antithetical expression ִי, *to die*, requires it to be taken in the sense of ִי, *to be born*, which the infin. active sometimes has (compare ִי, *the days for you to slaughter are accomplished*, Jerem. xxv. 34; Ewald, § 304, c). ִי is therefore well rendered by the Vulg. tempus nascendi; so also Rashbam, Luther, Coverdale, the Geneva Bible, Auth. Version (text), Ewald, Noyes, Heiligstedt, Elster, &c.

A time to plant, &c. The illustration from human existence is followed by another taken from vegetable life,

3 up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to save;
4 a time to break down, and a time to build up houses; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time

in order to evince more strikingly the utter inability of man's efforts to affect the immutably fixed condition of things. Not only our life, but even that of vegetables, has its beginning and end predetermined. Rashi, who is followed by some Christian commentators, regards this clause as metaphorically describing the planting and uprooting of nations and kingdoms (comp. Jerem. xviii. 6, &c.); but this is too far-fetched. Although נָתַן is more in accordance with the rule of forming infinitives from verbs (נָתַן), yet this is the only place where this form occurs; elsewhere the infin. is נָתַן (comp. Gesen. § 166, 2, Rem. 1; Ewald, 238, c). נָתַן has here its primary signification, *to pluck out, to uproot*; in the other passages where it occurs (Gen. xlix. 6; Josh. xi. 6, 9; 2 Sam. viii. 4; 1 Chron. xviii. 4; Zeph. ii. 4), it is generally used in a metaphorical sense. That it here refers to the uprooting at the appointed time of harvest, when the vegetables are gathered in, and not in order to transplant or to destroy an enemy's plants (entweder um es zu versetzen, oder: Pflanzung eines Feindes, Hitzig) is evident from the parallel hemistich, which speaks of the natural termination of human life, and therefore demands that the termination of the vegetable life should be understood in a natural manner, i. e., the ordinary ingathering of it when matured.

3. *A time to kill, &c.* Having averred, in the foregoing verse, that the natural termination of life is immutably fixed, Coheleth now submits that the bringing about of violent death and destruction, which seem fortuitous and to be in the power of man, is also predetermined. The common rendering of נָתַן וְנָתַן by *a time to kill and a time to heal*, is rightly rejected by Ibn Ezra,

inasmuch as it does not comport with the antithesis, which is so strictly adhered to in this description of events, since the opposite of *killing* is not *healing*; he therefore explains נָתַן by נָתַן, *to strike, to wound*, which would well agree with *to heal*. But as this explanation does away with the different kinds of death which Coheleth manifestly intends to describe, as is evident from the words נָתַן and נָתַן, the Syriac

version ܐܬܝܢܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ, which takes ܐܬܝܢܐ, *to heal*, in the sense of *preserving or saving life*, is preferable. The Chaldee, which is followed by some Christian commentators, refers this verse to the time of war, when destroying and saving life, demolishing and erecting buildings, take place; but this is too restricted an application of this passage. It is therefore better to take it in a more general sense, as descriptive of all accidents, affirming that every apparently fortuitous loss or preservation of life, or of the abode which shelters the living, is predetermined. Rashbam's explanation, which refers the whole description contained in 2-8 to *peace and war*, is still more objectionable.

4. *A time to weep, &c.* The sorrow and joy here mentioned are intimately connected with, and are the natural consequence of, the events described in the preceding verse. The expression נָתַן, *to weep*, in the beginning of this verse, is designedly chosen for its proximity in sound to the word נָתַן, *to build*, at the end of the last verse; so also נָתַן, *to leap, to dance*, is used in the sense and instead of נָתַן, *to rejoice*, because of its assonance with נָתַן, *to mourn*. The omission of the ִי before the two last infinitives is probably intended to give variety to the

5 to rejoice; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather up stones; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from 6 embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to 7 keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend garments, and a time to sew them together; a time to be silent, and a time

construction. Such omissions are not unfrequent (*vide infra*, xii. 12).

5. *A time to cast away stones, &c.* The Chaldee, Ibn Ezra, &c., take the casting away and the gathering of stones to refer to the time when these building materials are useless and dispersed, and to the time when they become useful again, and are carefully collected for the erection of dwellings. This well comports with the argument, inasmuch as it shews that the apparently opposite treatment of one and the same material, which seems to be at the arbitrary disposal of man, has nevertheless its cause, and is ordained by the same uncontrollable power. This explanation does not at all encroach upon the statement made in the latter part of the third verse, for there the fate of *houses* is described, whilst here that of *building materials* is mentioned. Others, however, understand it as describing the time of war and peace, when the invading enemy *casts stones* over arable land to render it unfit for cultivation (comp. 2 Kings iii. 19, 25), and when the stones are gathered up in order to restore the land to its useful state (Isa. v. 2), so Knobel, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, &c.; or, as referring to the demolishing and erecting of buildings or fortresses (De Lyra, Reynolds, Rosenmüller, Noyes, &c.); or to the work in plantations and vineyards, when there is a time for clearing these cultivated spots of stones, and when we must gather them to make fences (Patrick, Vailinger, &c.); or to the casting away and gathering stones *for any purpose whatsoever* (Holden, Kitto, &c.) לחבול and קיבץ, the *Kal* and the *Piel*, are, as frequently, used indis-

criminatedly, without any distinctive shade of meaning, *vide infra*, ver. 6; viii. 10; Ewald, § 120, b.

6. *A time to seek, &c.* Even the ever-changing desire in man to seek after new objects, and carelessly losing them as soon as they are obtained, the whimsical grasping of a thing, and then to reject it, all these are not done from choice, but are predetermined. Though the *Piel* of בָּרַח, *to be lost, to lose*, signifies *to destroy*, in all other places where it occurs in the Old Testament, its *Kal* signification is here rightly retained by the Sept., Vulg., Luther, Coverdale, Geneva Version, Bishops' Bible, Auth. Version, and the majority of modern commentators, as is evident from the antithetical שָׁקַח, *to seek*. We had a similar instance in the foregoing verse, where the *Piel* retains the *Kal* signification. The

Syriac ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܡܥܬܐ ܠܡܥܬܐ, transposing the words *seeking* and *losing*, has evidently arisen from the carelessness of the transcriber.

7. *A time to rend, &c.* The sustaining of losses, and the parting with that which is dear to us, mentioned in the preceding verse, suggested the allusion here made to the time of mourning, as indicated by the rending of garments, and the silence consequent upon deep grief. It was a custom which obtained at a very early period, to rend one's garments, or to tear them in the front of the breast, as an expression of grief, and, when the time of mourning was over, the rent (see *infra*, vii. 2) was repaired (comp. Gen. xxxvii. 29, xlv. 13;

8 to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, 9 and a time of peace. He who laboureth hath therefore no 10 advantage from that wherein he laboureth. I have considered the business which God hath given to the sons of men to

Judg. xi. 35; 2 Sam. i. 2. 11, iii. 31, xiii. 31; 1 Maccab. ii. 14, iii. 47; Judith, xiv. 16. 19; Joseph. Wars, 2. 15, 2; Mishna, Moed Katon, iii. 17; Shabbath, xiii. 3; Winer, Realwörterbuch, and Saalschütz, Archäologie der Hebräer, s. v. Trauer). The Jews to the present day still rend the front of their garments at the death of a parent, child, brother, or sister, as an expression of deep grief, and this act of rending is called קָרַע. The Chaldee has therefore rightly rendered the words לָקַח and לָקַח בְּעָרְסָא, *to tear the garment*, and לְמַעַן יִרְמָדָה, *to repair the rent*. When Herzfeld maintains that there can be no allusion here to the rending of garments at the time of mourning, *because this custom did not exist in Coheleth's time*, we oppose to this the foregoing quotations. For an instance of silence under deep grief, see Job ii. 12, 13.

8. *A time to love, &c.* Our loving a person and then hating him again, or being at war with a nation to-day and at peace to-morrow, are also predetermined by the same Omnipotent Disposer of all things. In all the instances adduced from the events of life, Coheleth used the *infinitive mood*, with the exception of the last clause, where *nouns* are employed, probably to mark the end of the list. The sacred writer began with *birth* and *death*, and finished with *war* and *peace*, as if to indicate that we enter upon the battle of life at our very birth, and that death alone terminates the conflict and secures peace.

9. *He who laboureth, &c.* Having confirmed the general proposition by twenty-eight illustrations from the common events of life, that nothing is within the power of man, but that all things are immutably fixed by

Omnipotence, Coheleth now submits that all the exertions of the industrious to alter his circumstances and to secure to himself abiding good (חַיִּים), must of necessity be ineffectual. The interrogative, as is frequently the case (*vide supra*, i. 3), is used for an *emphatic denial*; Luther has therefore rightly rendered it so (Man arbeite, wie man will, so kann man nicht mehr ausrichten), though led astray by the wrong version of the Vulgate, QUID HABET AMPLIUS HOMO DE LABORE SUO? *what more has man from his labour?* he mistook its connection with what precedes.

10. *I have considered the business, &c.* In this and in the following verse, Coheleth assigns a reason why the efforts of man to secure lasting good are ineffectual. He prefaces this reason, which is contained in the following verse, by telling us here that what he is going to say is the result of a minute inspection of the different employments which God has assigned to the children of men. The difficulty experienced in the interpretation of the following verse has been greatly increased by the Vulgate's mistranslation of this verse; *Vidi afflictionem, quam dedit Deus filiis hominum, ut distendantur in ea*, which is followed by Luther, Daß ich sahe die Mühe, die Gott den Menschen gegeben hat, daß sie darinnen geplagt werden; Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible, *for as touching the travail and carefulness which God hath given unto men, I see that he hath given it them, to be exercised in it*; the Geneva Version, *I have seen the travail that God hath given to the sons of men to humble them thereby*; Authorised Version, *I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it*, and which Bishop Reynolds, Knobel,

14 his labour, it is a gift of God. I knew that whatever God hath made, the same continueth for ever; to it nothing can be added, and from it nothing can be taken, and God

dependent upon יָדָעְתִּי, *I knew*. The conditional particle כִּי, *if*, is to be supplied after וְגַם, and כִּי־גַם, is its appodosis (comp. *infra*, v. 18; Ewald, § 357, c.) The construction is peculiar; it begins with the imperfect יִשָּׂא, and continues with the prae-terite שָׂאָה, with י conversive; the Syriac and Chaldee have the imperfect throughout. For the phrase וְגַם כִּי־גַם, see ii. 1. Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible (*for all that a man eateth and drinketh, yea whatsoever a man enjoyeth of all his labour, that same is a gift of God*) mistook the text for "כִּי־גַם שָׂאָה הָאֵלֹהִים וְגַם".

14. *I knew that whatever, &c.* The second lesson which Coheleth learned from the facts described in 1-9 is, that all the affairs of human life alluded to, which God has preordained, are *immutably* fixed, that no ingenuity or industry, however great, can affect it in the slightest degree, and that God has so ordained it, in order to make man feel how entirely dependent he is upon the Disposer of all things, and to arouse in him a reverential awe. יָדָעְתִּי, *I know*, as in ver. 12, marks the introduction of the second thing which became apparent to Coheleth. כִּי־אֵשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָאֱלֹהִים, *whatever God hath made*, does not denote *the works of creation* (Rashi, Grotius, Le Clerc, &c.), which is contrary to the scope of Coheleth — who evidently points out man's inability to affect any change in the circumstances of his life contrary to the preordained plan of God — but refers to לֵב וְזָקֵן, *God has fixed a time for all things*, and to the ensuing description. עָשָׂה, *to do, to make*, has here the sense of *to appoint, to ordain, to fix*. The pronoun הוּא has here the force of αὐτός in Greek, and idem in Latin, and is used for the sake of emphasis (comp. Gesen. § 124, 2, Rem. 3; Ewald, § 314). Herzfeld's remark, that the use of it

here makes כִּי־אֵשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָאֱלֹהִים, a *nominative absolute*, is contrary to the particle כִּי by which this clause is preceded. For the use of כִּי, in the sense of accession, see Gen. xxviii. 9; Levit. v. 16; Gesenius, § 154, 3, Rem. 2. The suffix in עָשָׂה refers to הָאֱלֹהִים. כִּי־אֵשֶׁר, when placed before an infinitive with ל, expresses *inability or impossibility* (comp. אֵין עֲשֵׂה לְהַרְצִיב, *nothing is able to stand before thee*, 2 Chron. xx. 6; Gesen. § 132, 3, Rem. 1; Ewald, § 321, c.) The construction of עָשָׂה with כִּי, used here and in viii. 12, 13, instead of the more regular one עָשָׂה (2 Kings i. 15, xix. 6; Jerem. i. 8), or עָשָׂה with the *accusative* of person or thing feared (Numb. xiv. 9; Job ix. 35), need not be regarded as belonging to later Hebrew (Herzfeld and others), since it also occurs in 1 Sam. xviii. 12. עָשָׂה, *that they may fear*, refers to אֲנִי, *men*, in the preceding verse, which must be supplied in the translation, being too far removed from the verb. The reading שִׂדְרִי with one *Yod*, which is found in many MSS., and noted by the Masorites instead of שִׂדְרִי, does not alter the sense of the word. According to the Haggadic interpretation, this verse is to be rendered *I know that whatsoever God hath made shall be for ever, man cannot add to it or take from it (i. e., cannot alter it), but God doth it (i. e., does alter it), that man might fear before him* (see the Midrash *in loco*). So also the Chaldee, and Rashi, who refers to the Deluge and to the days of Ahaz and Hezekiah, when God altered the course of the sea and of the sun, "which he hath established for ever," in order that man might fear before him. But this rendering is both contrary to the scope of the passage and to the meaning of עָשָׂה, in the first clause of this very verse. The

15 hath so done it that men may fear before him. What hath been was long ago, and what is to be was long ago, for God

Vulg., NON POSSUMUS EIS QUISQUAM ADDERE NEO AUFERRE, QUÆ FECIT DEUS UT TIMEATUR, *we cannot add anything, nor take away from the things which God has made that he may be feared*, violently construes the text כִּי־אֵשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָאֱלֹהִים וְגַם.

15. *What hath been, &c.* That God's ordinances are immutably fixed, is evident from the undeviating occurrence of the same events. For כִּי־אֵשֶׁר, *what hath been*, see *supra*, i. 9. The Sept. and Vulg. have rightly rendered it here ὅτι γὰρ, *quod factum est*, though they mis-translated it in i. 9; whilst Desvoeux and Hodgson, to be consistent in their error, render it here also interrogatively. The pronoun הוּא, as in the preceding verse, is used for the sake of emphasis, and the auxiliary הָיָה, as usual, is to be supplied, so that כִּי־אֵשֶׁר refers to that which recently took place, whilst הָיָה הוּא כִּי־אֵשֶׁר describes the same thing as already having occurred long before. So the Syriac version, מַלְּאִי־יָסוֹן מִכֵּן כִּי־אֵשֶׁר, *what was, has been long ago*; Rashi, כִּי־אֵשֶׁר מִלְּפָנֵינוּ כִּי־הוּא עָשָׂה וְרָאִינוּהוּ, *that which happened before our eyes had happened long before, and we have seen it, or heard of it from others who saw it*. The Vulg. (QUOD FACTUM EST, IPSUM PERMANET, *that which has been made, the same remains*), Luther (Was Gott thut, das stehet da, *that which God does, remains*), the Geneva Bible (*what is that that hath been? that is now*), Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, and the Auth. Version (*the thing that hath been is now*), which are followed by Knobel, Ewald, Heiligstedt, Elster, Vaihinger, &c., violate the meaning of כִּי־אֵשֶׁר, which invariably denotes time *long past* (vide *supra*, i. 10). Whilst De Wette, Noyes, Hirzig, Stuart, &c. (*that which is, as long ago*), most inconsistently

ascribe a sense to כִּי־אֵשֶׁר here which they rightly deny in i. 12. כִּי־אֵשֶׁר exactly corresponds to our phrase *that which is to be*, and to the French *ce qui est à être* (comp. Gen. xv. 12; Prov. xix. 8; Gesen. § 132, 3, Rem. 1; Ewald, § 237). Luther's rendering of this clause und was er thun will, das muß werden, *and that which he will do must come to pass*, is an unwarranted paraphrase.

For God recalleth, &c. The reason why the events of every period are alike is because God, having fixed a time for everything (לֵב וְזָקֵן, vide, ver. 1), that which has transpired at a certain season, must return with the return of that season. The י before הָיָה is *causal*, assigning a reason for the assertion made in the preceding clause. עָשָׂה, *to seek out, to recall*, part. Niph'al of הָיָה, *to run after*, עָשָׂה, is that which is chased away, put to flight, that which is gone and past. This term is here designedly chosen because of its connection with time, whose rapid march overtakes and speedily leaves behind every event which God has predetermined for every season. Having referred to the miraculous passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, to illustrate its interpretation of the preceding verse that God suspends the laws of nature, the Haggada, in harmony with that interpretation, explains יַעֲשֶׂה הָאֱלֹהִים, *and God avenged the persecuted Israelites, i. e., he inflicted punishment upon the Egyptians who pursued the Jews into the sea* (comp. the Midrash, the Chaldee Paraphr., and Rashi). That the Sept. (καὶ ὁ θεὸς ζήτησεν τὸν διωκόμενον), Symmachus (καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐζητήσατο τὸν διωκόμενον), and the Syriac

version סִלְלָן נִצְלָן כִּי־אֵשֶׁר (should follow this sense of עָשָׂה, is what might have been

16 recalleth what is past. And, moreover, I saw under the sun, in the place of justice there was iniquity, and in the place of 17 equity there was iniquity. I said to my heart, God will

expected, but that Seb. Schmidt, Rambach, Döderlein, Holden, Heine-manu, Hengstenberg, &c., should have adopted this Hagadic interpretation is surpassing strange, for it is contrary to the former part of the verse, with which it is evidently connected; it anticipates what follows, and has, as we have seen, arisen from the Midrashic explanation of the preceding part of this verse. Luther's version denn er trachtet und jaget ihm nach, is both contrary to the text and unintelligible.

16. And moreover I saw, &c. The conclusion—that enjoyment of the present is the only thing left for man—at which Coheleth arrived from the contemplation of the inability of industry to counteract the immutably fixed events of human life, is now corroborated by another insurmountable difficulty, which our exertions to secure lasting good have to encounter. Man's exertions are not only baffled by the inscrutable laws of God, but are defeated by the lawlessness and wickedness of those who are appointed under God to uphold and protect the rights of the community. וַיַּרְא, and again, moreover, indicates the commencement of another difficulty. The omission of it by the Vulgate weakens the sense. מקום, place, is not the object of רָאָה, I saw (the Sept., Luther, Geneva Bible, Authorised Version, Desvoeux, Hodgson, De Wette, Knobel, Ewald, Vaihinger, &c.), which is contrary to the accents, and imparts a tameness to the diction, but is simply an adverb of place for מִקְוֶה, in the place (vide infra, xi. 3; Job i. 4; Ezek. vi. 13; Gesen. § 118; Ewald. § 204, a), thus leaving the whole circumstance as the accusative of the verb: so the Vulg., Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, Herzfeld, Hitzig, Noyes, Stuart, Elster, &c. מקום, i. q., עֵם, with the

demonstrative הַזֶּה, (vide Jerem. xviii. 2; Ps. cxvii. 6; Gesen. § 150, 1; Ewald, § 216, d) is used after קוֹל הַיָּם and קוֹל הַיָּם for the sake of emphasis, just as הוּא in ver. 14, and is therefore wrongly omitted by the Vulg. The remark of Mendelssohn, Herzfeld, and Philippson, that עֵם—die Strafe des Ungerechten, פֶּן der Lohn des Gerechten sei, und daß also עֵם, auf עֵם bezogen, das Ungestraftbleiben des Ungerechten, dagegen auf פֶּן bezogen, das Unbelohnbleiben des Gerechten bedeute—denotes the punishment of the wicked, and פֶּן the reward of the righteous, and that עֵם when referred to עֵם, signifies the withholding of punishment from the wicked, whilst, with reference to פֶּן, it means the withholding of reward from the righteous, is very artificial. The simplest way is to take the clause עֵם עֵם הַיָּם as a mere repetition after עֵם הַיָּם, to give intensity to the statement; this is frequently done in Hebrew to describe a continued state of things (vide infra, iv. 1; Isa. liii. 7; Ewald, § 313, a). The Sept. καὶ ἔτι ἵδον ὑπὸ τὴν ἡλιον τόπον τῆς κρίσεως, καὶ ὁ ἀσεβὴς καὶ τὸν ἡγίον τῶν δικαίων, καὶ ὁ εὐσεβὴς, and moreover, I saw under the sun the place of judgment, there was the impious; and the place of the righteous, there was the pious; both confounds the abstracts עֵם and פֶּן with the concretes עֵם and פֶּן in the following verse, in which Luther (da war ein gottloses Wesen; und Stätten der Gerechtigkeit, da waren Gottlose) partly shares, and has עֵם for עֵם, which the Arabic follows, but which has evidently arisen from the transcriber mistaking ἀσεβὴς for εὐσεβὴς.

17. I said to my heart, &c. Under these distressing circumstances, finding that there is no protection of right or administration of justice here, Coheleth at first tried to com-

judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for 18 every thing and deed there. Yet I said to my heart respecting

fort himself with the thought that there may be an infallible tribunal hereafter, when the righteous Judge will redress every grievance, and reward the just and the unjust, according to their merits. Whether we take עֵם as an adverb of place, there, i. e., with God (comp. Gen. xlix. 24), who is mentioned in the preceding clause (the Sept., Syriac, Ibn Ezra, the Geneva Bible, the Auth. Version, Reynolds, Heiligstedt, Elster, Hengstenberg, &c.), or regard it as an adverb of time, then (the Vulg., St. Jerome, the Chaldee, Knobel, De Wette, &c.), the context shews beyond all doubt that the retribution in question refers to a future bar of judgment. This is evident from the antithesis (verse 18–21), where Coheleth expresses a doubt about what he has here advanced, and where it is admitted, on all hands, that he discusses a future state of existence: rightly, therefore, the Chaldee יָמֵי הַיָּם, יָמֵי הַיָּם, God will judge in the great day of judgment; St. Jerome, IN TEMPORIS JUDICII, IN FUTURUM JUDICIUM, future judgment; Ibn Ezra, שֶׁם שֶׁם הַיָּם, לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא. The alteration of עֵם into עֵם, præt. of עָם, to appoint (Archbishop Secker, Houbigant, Döderlein, Van der Palm, Dathé, Hodgson, Boothroyd, Holden, Ewald, Hitzig, Stuart, &c.), must be rejected as arbitrary. Equally arbitrary is the assertion of Herzfeld, which is followed by Fürst (Concordance, s. v.) and Vaihinger, that עֵם is the part. of the Talmudic verb עָם, to estimate, to judge. The Vulgate's omission of עֵם, will no more surprise us after what we have seen of their proceedings with the text. Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible, "Then thought I in my mind, God shall separate the righteous from the ungodly, and then shall be the time and judgment of all counsels and works," can neither

be reconciled with the original, nor with any of the ancient versions.

18. Yet I said to my heart, &c. The momentary consolation found in the thought of a future judgment, as expressed in the preceding verse, being based upon assigning a priori a superiority to man over other creatures, now disappears, when Coheleth comes to think that the only dignity with which God has endowed the human race above the brute creation is, that he has enabled man to understand that he is like the beast. The formula, אִם אִם אִם, which is repeated at the beginning of this verse, shews that the continuation of this thought takes a different turn, which is best indicated in the translation by supplying again, yet. As the preposition עַל is used to denote, 1. The object of a discourse, concerning (vide supra, ii. 10), 2. The standard by which a thing is measured, according to (Gen. xlviii. 6; Exod. xii. 6), 3. The cause for which a thing is done, because (Ps. xlv. 23; Job xxxiv. 36), and as עַל, or the fem. עַלָּה, signifies both a word, speech, or language, and a thing, a matter, affair (vide supra, i. 8); hence the Sept. and the Syriac render עַלָּה, περί λαλιᾶς,

concerning the speech; or Herzfeld, according to the language of the children of men; the Vulg., Coverdale, the Bishop's Bible, Auth. Ver., Knobel, Noyes, &c., concerning, or with respect to, the affairs of man; Ibn Ezra, Ewald, De Wette, Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, &c., on account of the children of men. Whichever of these meanings be adopted, the sense of the passage, according to our view, remains substantially the same, and the choice must be determined by the remainder of the verse, and the use of this phrase in the other passages of this book (infra, vii. 14; viii. 2). עַלָּה is the infinit. Kal עַל from עָל = נָחַל, to separate, to select, to choose (according to the analogy of עַל infinit. of

the children of men, God hath chosen them to shew that

וְיָ, Isa. xlv. 1; וְיָ, Jer. v. 26; comp. Gesen. § 87, Rem. 3; Ewald, § 238, b; § 255, d), with the suffix ׁ in the accusative; the ׁ before it introduces the indirect speech, which is frequently the case after the verb ׁ (comp. וְיָ, the *Eternal said he would destroy you* (Deut. ix. 25; Esth. i. 17; iv. 13; *infra*, viii. 17; Ewald, § 338, a). The Sept., οὕτως αὐτοῖς, *that he may judge them*, has evidently arisen from exchanging it for וְיָ in the preceding verse, which, like וְיָ, is the eighth word of the parallel line, both of which begin with exactly the same

words; whilst the Syriac וְיָ mis-took for וְיָ, the subject of the infinit. ׁ, follows the verb between which the accusative ׁ is inserted. The proper order would be וְיָ, but instances where the object precedes the subject are not unfrequent (comp. וְיָ, as *fire consumes straw*, Isa. v. 24; וְיָ, when *Sargon sent him*, *ibid.* xx. 1; Gesenius, § 133, 3; Ewald, § 309, a). As the ׁ before וְיָ, the second infinitive, shews that it is intimately connected with the first infinitive, and that it must refer to the same subject; the word, as it now stands in the text, yields a most awkward sense, i. e., God has chosen the children of men that he might see they are beasts. There can, therefore, be little doubt that the Sept.

(τοὺς ἀνθρώπους), the Syriac (ܐܢܫܝܢ), the Vulg., and St. Jerome (*ut ostendere*), are right in reading it וְיָ, the *Hiphil*, instead of וְיָ, the *Kal*; nothing is more easily mistaken by a transcriber than the insignificant ׁ and ׁ. Hence Rashi rightly explains it by וְיָ. The *Sh'va* under ׁ, instead of ׁ=ׁ, is most probably owing to one of the Segol points having been dropped, as the sacred writer always uses ׁ before the ׁ (*vide* ii. 22; vi. 10; xii. 9). וְיָ, *beast*, as frequently is used for

beasts. וְיָ, *that they are beasts*, i. e., *like beasts*. To express strongly the resemblance of one thing to another, the Hebrews omit the ׁ comparison, and make the thing wherewith the subject is compared the predicate of the subject (comp. וְיָ, *his head is the finest gold*, i. e., *as the finest gold*, Song of Songs, v. 11; וְיָ, *if she be a wall*, i. e., *like a wall*, *ibid.* viii. 9). The accumulation of the relative pronouns וְיָ, yields that ironical climax which is expressed in Latin by *ipsissimi*, and in German by *höchsteifst* (comp. Ewald, § 315, a). The rendering of the Sept., Vulg., and Syriac, with the exception of the mistake adverted to, is substantially the same which we advocate. Rashi's explanation, which is evidently the basis of the Turkey merchant's rendering, "Oh! that God would enlighten them, and make them see that even they themselves are like beasts," and is followed by Adam Clark, &c., &c., referring it to the corrupt judges mentioned in ver. 16, is contrary to the form and signification of וְיָ, as well as to the scope of the passage. The explanation of Ibn Ezra, "I said in my heart, because of the children of men, God has chosen them (from among all creatures), and yet I saw that they are like beasts to themselves," i. e., in their own estimation (אמרו בלבי בעבור בני האדם שנבחרו האלהים מכל חולדה הארץ וראיתי שהם כמו בהמות הם לנפשם במחשבותם); the Geneva version, "I considered in mine heart the estate of the children of men, that God had purged them; yet to see to, they are in themselves as beasts;" Broughton, "I said in my heart, after the manner of the sons of men, when God made them known, that I saw how they are beasts; they to themselves;" and the Authorised Version (text), "I said in my heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they

19 they, even they, are like beasts. For man is mere chance, and the beast is mere chance, and they are both subject to

themselves are beasts;" besides the objections which they individually incur, are alike guilty of assigning two different subjects to the two inseparable infinitives. Luther's version (Ich sprach in meinem Herzen von dem Wesen der Menschen, darinnen Gott anzeigt und läßt es ansehn, als wären sie unter sich selbst wie das Vieh), Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible ("I communed with my own heart also concerning the children of men, how God hath chosen them, and yet letteth them appear as though they were beasts"), escape this objection, but they can neither be harmonised with the text nor context. De Wette, Knobel, Ewald, Heiligstedt, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c. (I spake in my heart, it is because of the children of men—i. e., that the perversion of justice described in ver. 16, happens—that God may prove them, and that they may see that they are beasts) violently connect this verse with verse 16, assign two different subjects to the two infinitives, and create a harsh ellipsis, which is inadmissible. Still more objectionable is Philippon's violent rendering, Ich sprach in meinem Herzen über das Gerede der Menschensohne, wofür um Gott zu erforchen ist und zu sehen, daß sie Vieh sind, making וְיָ the accusative of וְיָ, i. q., *the children of men*, which has been anticipated in the marginal reading of the Auth. Ver.

19. For man is a mere chance, &c. Coheleth assigns a reason why he put man and beast upon the same level in the foregoing verse: for both, he says, are the offspring of, and the victims to, the same blind chance; *their bodies* are alike subject to death, and *their souls* are the same; man has no advantage whatever over the beast, for both are alike vain; hence the correctness of the remark, that "men are like beasts." The fact that וְיָ is written all the three times

with a *Segol*, shews beyond doubt that it is in the absolute, and must be taken as the predicate, i. e., 'a mere chance are the children of men,' they are the offspring of blind accident. For the meaning of וְיָ, see ii. 14. וְיָ, *and the same chance is to them both*, i. e., *both are subject to the same chance*, is not explanatory of וְיָ, *man is a mere chance, and the beast is a mere chance* (Hengstenberg), but expresses an additional idea, i. e., man and beast are not only the offspring of the same blind chance, but are alike subject to it during their life. For וְיָ, *one, the same*, see ii. 14. To make this statement orthodox, the Hugada restricts it to the wicked, who, according to its exegesis, are described at the end of the preceding verse to be like beasts (*vide* Midrash, *in loco*). Hence the Chaldee paraphrase, וְיָ, *as for the fate of the wicked and the fate of the unclean beast, both have the same fate*; hence also the Sept., καὶ αὐτοῖς συνάνασμα τῶν κακῶν καὶ τῶν ἀκαθάρτων τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν αὐτοῖς and the Syriac, ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ, *these*

(i. e., the wicked mentioned in the preceding verse) *meet with the fate of the children of men and the fate of the beast; one fate have they*. The Vulgate: IDEIRCO UNUS INTERITUS EST HOMINIS ET JUMENTORUM, ET AQUA UTRIVSQUE CONDITIO, *therefore the death of man and of beasts is one, and the condition of both is the same*; Luther, denn es geht dem Menschen wie dem Vieh, omitting a clause; who is literally translated by Coverdale, "for it happeneth unto men as it doth unto beasts, even one condition unto them both," supplying the omission of Luther and Coverdale; the Geneva Version, "for the condi-

22 ward to the earth. Wherefore I saw that there is nothing better for man than to rejoice in his labours, for this is his portion, since no one can bring him to see what will be here-iv. 1 after. Then I saw again all the oppressed who are suffering under the sun, and beheld the tears of the oppressed, and

וְיָדַעְתִּי, וְיָדַעְתִּי, וְיָדַעְתִּי, and

who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward, and whether the spirit of the beast goes downward to the earth? the Chaldee, כִּן הוּא הַנְּפִיקָה לְרֵד, אין רוח נשקחת בני אנושא וְהַנְּפִיקָה לְרֵד לְאָרְצָא, וְרוּחַ נְשָׁכָתָא בְּנֶפְשָׁא הַנְּפִיקָה הוּא לְרֵד לְאָרְצָא, who is wise enough to know whether the soul of man goes upward to heaven, and whether the soul of the beast goes downward to the earth? So also Luther, the Geneva Version, Knobel, Herzfeld, De Wette, Ewald, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, and almost all modern commentators. The unnatural construction of Rashi, "He who has understanding understands that the spirit of man goes upward, and the spirit of the beast goes downward," referring to Joel, ii. 14, for this sense of יָדַע, which is followed by Mendelssohn and Preston; and the far-fetched explanation of Ibn Ezra, "Who knows, who among men can understand, the immense difference between the spirit of man that goes upward, and the spirit of the beast that goes downward, not one in a thousand" — מי שידע בני האדם — והפרש שיש בין רוח האדם ורוח הבהמה והענין כי לא אחד מני אלה ודעה הרוח עמוקה וצריכה לראותה ולא יוכלו להבין אפילו קצתה כי אם המשיכילים — which is followed by Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, Reynolds, Patrick, Hodgson, Holden, Hengstenberg, &c., are contrary to the scope of the passage, and violate the intimate connection which subsists between this verse and verse 19. Even Mr. Ayre, in the orthodox edition of the second volume of Horne's Introduction (p. 745), disapproves of Hengstenberg for not admitting that the *He* is interrogative, and rightly

remarks, "that a distinct assertion here of a future life would have been premature; that the author reserved for his conclusion." The denial of the immortality of the soul contained in this verse forms the very basis of Coheleth's disquisition, as we have seen in i. 2-11.

22. *Wherefore I saw, &c.* Since this is the condition of man, Coheleth again shews that there is nothing left for him but to enjoy the present, as this is his only portion, and as no one can shew what will take place after our death. The וְיָדַעְתִּי, as frequently, is inferential. וְיָדַעְתִּי, portion, lot, as in ii. 10. Though this verse is an inference from the preceding verses, and therefore has its cause there, yet, to make it more impressive, Coheleth repeats the reason in a different form. The interrogative, מי יביאנו לראות, who shall bring him to see? is the same as יָדַעְתִּי, who knows? in the preceding verse, and is used for an emphatic denial. For the construction see ii. 1. וְיָדַעְתִּי, what will be after him? i. e., after his death, hereafter (*vide infra*, x. 14), whether there be a future state of existence and enjoyment or not.

1. *Then I saw again, &c.* From this point of view, viz., that there is no future state, Coheleth again returns to contemplate the bitter state of sufferings, the violation of social laws, and the perversion of justice which he alluded to in iii. 16. וְיָדַעְתִּי, literally *I turned and saw*, i. e., *I again saw*, indicates the return to the subject from another point of view; for the adverbial use of וְיָדַעְתִּי, see i. 7. The Vulg., *VERTI ME AD ALIA, ET VIDI, I turned myself to other things and saw*, is a loose paraphrase,

they had no comforter, and from their oppressors there was

and mistakes the connection. וְיָדַעְתִּי, in the first clause, is taken by the Sept. (συκοφαντίας), Vulg. (*calumnias*), Chaldee (חֲסִידִין), and after them Coverdale, Geneva Version, Luther, Auth. Version, Knobel, Hodgson, Hitzig, De Wette, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, &c., as the abstract, *oppression*; whilst, in the second clause, these same authorities render it as *concrete, oppressed*. But the inconsistency of taking the same expression in the same verse in two different senses is most glaring; and as there can be no doubt that וְיָדַעְתִּי, in the second clause, means *oppressed*, which is evident from the expression וְיָדַעְתִּי, tears, which can only be predicated of persons; its meaning in the first clause must therefore be determined thereby. Hence Sym. (τῶς συκοφαντούμενος), Rashi, Rashbam, Jermin, Herzfeld, Philippson, &c., are consistent in taking it as *concrete* in both clauses. The objection of Knobel, Hitzig, Holden, Elster, &c., that וְיָדַעְתִּי does not well agree with this rendering, has no force, for it is just as appropriate to say וְיָדַעְתִּי, to make oppressed ones, as to say וְיָדַעְתִּי, to make slaves, or וְיָדַעְתִּי, to make souls. וְיָדַעְתִּי, tear, is used collectively.

And they had no comforter. The manifestation of sympathy with sufferers in the East was and still is more formal than in the West (compare iii. 7, vii. 2, and xii. 5). Friends even travelled great distances, and stayed with the sufferer for days, in order to comfort him. The Jews in the present day still regard it as an imperative duty to visit the afflicted, which is called וְיָדַעְתִּי, comforting the mourners, the very word used in our text, and the sufferers look forward to these condoling visits as a great relief. This will shew the force of the passage before us. The individuals in question are not only suffering from cruel injustice, but are left to bewail their gloomy fate without the customary and the highly-prized condolence,

which renders their sufferings still more poignant. The clause וְיָדַעְתִּי continues to depend upon וְיָדַעְתִּי, i. e., and behold, from the hand of their oppressors there is violence. וְיָדַעְתִּי, power, is here used in a bad sense, for force, violence. The repetition of the words, "and they had no comforter," describes pathetically the continued state of things (*vide supra*, iii. 16). The Hagadic explanation of this clause, as given in the Chaldee paraphrase, לֹא הָיוּ לְמַנְחָתָם מִן דְּרַאשֵׁינָהּ, וְיָדַעְתִּי, וְיָדַעְתִּי, and there is none with a strong hand and power to deliver them from the hand of their oppressors, and none to comfort them, which is followed by the Vulgate, *NEC POSSE RESISTERE EORUM VIOLENTIÆ CUNCTORUM AUXILIO DESTITUTOS, nor were they able to resist their violence, being destitute of help from any*; Coverdale, and there was no man to comfort them, or that would deliver and defend them from the violence of their oppressors, and others, not only require us to supply the negative particle לֹא, but also the principal verb וְיָדַעְתִּי, to take in a double sense, viz., power to resist, and violence, according to the Hagadic laws of exegesis (*vide supra*, p. 30), and to reconstrue the whole sentence, which none but the rabid opponents of the received text would do. Neither does Luther's version (und die ihnen Unrecht thaten, waren zu mächtig, daß sie keinen Tröster haben konnten, and those that did them injustice were too powerful, so that they (the sufferers) could not be comforted) express the sense of the text. The usual interpretation is supported by the Sept., ἀπὸ χειρὸς συκοφαντῶντων αὐτοὺς ἰσχύς, from the hand of their oppressors was violence; Rashi, וְיָדַעְתִּי, מַכְרִידִים וְיָדַעְתִּי, their oppressors subdued and overpowered them violently, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, and most modern commentators. The Syriac, which rightly translated the

first מַנְחָתָם, מַנְחָתָם, comforter, in-

- 2 violence, and they had no comforter; and I esteemed happy the dead who have died long ago, more than the living who are still alive; and happier than both, him who hath not been born, who hath not seen these evil doings which are

consistently renders the second **הַחַיִּים**, **הַחַיִּים**, helper.

2. And I esteemed happy the dead, &c. These heart-rending and harrowing miseries, brought upon the helpless and innocent by the very men who were appointed to ameliorate the condition of the community, were so intolerable, that Coheleth regarded those whom death had relieved from these bitter sufferings as happier than those who endured them. This lamentable description of the misery to which Coheleth was an eyewitness (**הָאֵינִי**), and which so frequently calls forth his indignation against the authors of it (*vide infra*, v. 8, viii. 4, 10, x. 5-7), shews that Solomon could not have written this book, for in his days no such misery was prevalent, as is evident from 1 Kings iv. 20-25; x. 6-9. Besides, even if the books of Kings and Chronicles had not given us the history of this monarch's enlightened and peaceful reign, it could not be imagined that such a mighty and wise potentate, who had given such a signal evidence of the administration of justice in the case of the two mothers, would so bitterly complain of the judges of his land who were of his own creation, when it was in his power to crush the miscreants and avenge the cause of the injured, who are represented as "having no comforter." **הַחַיִּים**, according to Ibn Ezra, Herzfeld, &c., is a verbal adjective, like **הַחַיִּים**, and, as is frequently the case, is used with a personal pronoun for a finite verb (comp. Exod. vii. 27, ix. 2, *al.*); according to Gesen., Knobel, Heiligstedt, Elster, &c., it is the participle *Piel* for **הַחַיִּים**, the **ח** having dropped, as in Zeph. i. 14; and, according to Rashbam, Mendelssohn, Ewald, Hitzig, &c., it

is the *infinitive absolute*, continuing the construction which began with the finite verb (compare Ewald, § 361, c). The first of these views is the least objectionable, since the examples adduced to shew that the *Piel* part drops the **ח** are questionable, and since the pronoun **אֲנִי**, with which **הַחַיִּים** is connected, is against its being an infinitive. The additions **הַחַיִּים**, *who have died long ago*, to **הַחַיִּים**, *the dead*, and **הַחַיִּים**, *who are still living*, to **הַחַיִּים**, *the living*, which appear tautological in a modern translation, give peculiar emphasis to the original, i. e., Coheleth not only regarded those who have *recently* been deprived of life as happier than the living, but he praised those who had long been forgotten (a fate which was so much dreaded by the Easterns), as happier than those who were not only living, but were in vigour, and had the prospect of a long life. The Septuagint's rendering of **הַחַיִּים** by **οἱ ζῶντες** (*οἱ ζῶντες* *ταῦ* *νῦν*, *as many of them as are living until now*, cannot be reconciled with the text; the Vulg., Coverdale, and the Bishops' Bible most arbitrarily omit both additions. **הַחַיִּים** is a contraction of **הַחַיִּים** (Gen. xv. 16; 1 Sam. vii. 12; Gesenius, § 150, 2; Ewald, § 217, e).

3. And happier than both, &c. The comparison of the death-relieved sufferers with the living martyrs is here extended to the yet unborn, who are pronounced as happier still, because they have not suffered at all, whilst those relieved by death had suffered for some time. A parallel passage with the one before us, where the dead and the unborn are preferred to the living sufferers, is to be found in Job —

Why died I not from the womb,
Come forth from the belly, and depart?

- 4 done under the sun. Then I saw that all the toil, and all the dexterity in work, are from jealousy of one toward the other, this also is vanity and striving after the wind;

Wherefore did knees meet me,
And why breasts, that I should suck?
For now I should have sank down and rested,
I should have slept, and then have reposed
With kings and counsellors of the earth,
Who built themselves pyramids;
Or with princes rich in gold,
Who filled their houses with silver;
Or like a hidden abortion I should not
have been,
Like infants who have never seen the light.
III. 11-16.

So also Theognis —

Πάντων μὲν μὴ φῦλας ἐπιχθονίαισι δῖος ἄριστος,
Μὴδ' ἐκείναις αἰγὰς ὄρεος ἡλίου.
Φύλα δ' ἔπος ἀκίστα πύλας ἄιδας περῆσαι,
καὶ κῆσθαι πολλὴν γῆν ἱππαμειμένην.

"Not to be born, never to see the sun,
No worldly blessing is a greater one!
And the next best is speedily to die,
And, lapt beneath a load of earth, to lie!"
425-428.

הַחַיִּים must be mentally supplied before **וְהַחַיִּים**, as it still governs the accusative **הַחַיִּים**. The Sept., Syriac, Luther, the Authorised Version, &c., make **הַחַיִּים** to be the *nominative*, which both weakens the force of the passage and involves an anomaly; whilst the Vulg., ET FELICIOREM UTROQUE JUDICAVI, QUI NECDUM NATUS EST, and I judged him happier than both of them who has not yet been born, which is followed by the Geneva Version, &c., unnecessarily introduces another verb to govern the accusative. **וְהַחַיִּים**, to see evil, i. e., to experience it, to suffer under it (comp. the opposite phrase **וְהַחַיִּים**, to see good, ii. 1).

4. Then I saw that all the toil, &c. The industry and dexterity manifested in the pursuits and avocations of life, in spite of the unalterably fixed destinies of man, and to the neglect of the enjoyment of the present, which is the only portion of man, arise from a mean desire to outdo one's neighbour, whose prosperity is looked upon with a jealous eye; yet this base competition frequently terminates in the loss of the object eagerly pursued, and in

striving after the wind. **וְהַחַיִּים**, *all the dexterity in work*, that they are from jealousy, &c., is again an attraction instead of **וְהַחַיִּים**, *and I saw that all the toil and the dexterity in work are from jealousy, &c.* (*vide supra*, ii. 24). The solution of this attraction shews that **וְ** is a conjunction, depending upon the verb **וְהַחַיִּים**, I saw (comp. Gen. i. 4; Job xxii. 12; Gesen., § 142, 4, Rem. 2; § 165, 4, c; Ewald, § 336), and that the copula **וְ** refers to **וְהַחַיִּים**. This is, moreover, evident from the preposition **בְּ** in **וְהַחַיִּים**, which indicates the cause of this industry and dexterity, and must be construed with **וְהַחַיִּים**, for it never goes with **וְהַחַיִּים**; this noun is invariably construed with **בְּ** (1 Kings xix. 10), or with **אֶ** (Prov. iii. 31; xxiii. 17; xxiv. 1), and from the fact that **וְהַחַיִּים** is not passive, being *envied*, *das Beneiden*-werden, but active, *the envying*, *das Beneiden*. Hence the the Vulg., RURSUS CONTEMPLATUS SUM OMNES LABORES HOMINUM, ET INDUSTRIAS ANIMADVERTI PATERE INVIDIÆ PROXIMI, again I considered all the labours of men, and I noticed that their industries are exposed to the envy of their neighbour; Luther, *ich sahe an Arbeit und Geschäftigkeit in allen Sachen: da neibet einer den andern*; Coverdale, "again I saw that all the travail and diligence of labour was hated of every one;" the Authorised Version, in the text, "again I considered all travail and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour;" in the margin, "this is the envy of a man from his neighbour;" and Hodgson, "Then I viewed every ingenious and excellent work; but such caused a man to be envied by his neighbour," do not give the sense of the original.

5 the sluggard foldeth his hands and yet eateth his meat;

5. *The sluggard foldeth his hands, &c.* To show the vain efforts of the mean characters mentioned in the preceding verse, Coheleth points to the fact that, while industrious and dexterous jealousy, attempting greedily to grasp the object of her eager pursuit, finds frequently that she has striven after the wind, the slothful man quietly enjoys his repast. Much difficulty has been experienced by commentators in explaining this verse, and multifarious are the opinions respecting its meaning. This perplexity, I believe, is not owing to any real difficulty in the text or context, but is to be ascribed to the fact that interpreters have too implicitly followed the traditional explanation. Thus the Chaldee paraphrases this verse, שְׁטָמָא אִיל וּמְנַסְתָּא יָת דְּרִי וּבְקִישָׁא וְלֵא, צְבִי לְמִסְתָּרָא וּבְנִסְתָּרָא יִכְלֵי יָת כֵּל מַה דְּרֵאָה לֵיהּ וְנִאֲדִילֵי קִטּוֹ מִכֵּל מִשְׁכּוֹן בְּקִירָה, *the fool goes and folds his hands in summer and will not labour, and in winter eats all he has, even the garment from the skin of his flesh*; taking it to mean that the fool, unwilling to work at opportune seasons, when labour is to be got, is obliged, at the time when employment is not to be found, and when hunger-bitten, as a penalty, to sell his very garments in order to satisfy the cravings of nature. It is this explanation which has influenced all the commentators. The Vulg. (STULTUS COMPLICAT MANUS SUAS ET COMEDIT CARNE SUAS, DICENS: *the fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh, saying, &c.*) takes it in the same sense, and puts the words of the following verse into the mouth of the fool; thus also Ibn Ezra, נֶחֱמָה כְּסִיּוֹת עֲצֵלִים אֵין לָהֶם קִנְיָה, *alas! the covetous of skins have no property*; אֵין יִתְעַסְקוּ בְּמַלְאכָה שִׁדְדוֹ מִמֶּנָּה רַק חֻבְבָּק אֵין יִדְהֵם וְאוֹכִלִים מִה שֵׁשׁ לָהֶם וְיִשְׁתַּדּוּ בְּלֹא מִדָּה וְאוֹרֵי שְׂדֵה אֹכֵל כֹּל מַה שֵׁשׁ לוֹ וְלֹא יַעֲמֹל לְהוֹסִיק כֹּאִילוֹ אוֹכֵל אֵין בְּשֹׁר בְּעֵבֶר שִׁמּוֹת בְּרַעַ: מִדָּה, *there are also sluggard fools among men, who are not jealous, and do not engage in work to live thereby, but fold their hands, and eat up all they have, and*

are left without support; and having eaten up all he had, and not laboured to replenish, he is like one consuming his own flesh, for he dies of hunger (ver. 9); these are the words of the fool, who says, I have plenty, &c. Hence Coverdale: *the fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth up his own flesh; one handful (saith he) is better with rest, &c.*; and Mendelssohn; and hence the various attempts to connect it with the preceding verse. Bishop Reynolds says that this envy has for its consequence, that foolish and slothful men refuse to take pains, and prefer poverty rather than to be envied. Mendelssohn takes this verse to be an address of the diligent to the indolent, to blame him. Knobel, Preston, Philippon, Elster, &c., maintain that this verse describes the opposite extreme; the preceding verse depicted a man driven by jealousy to laborious industry, whilst this verse speaks of one who, through indolence, lives on his patrimony, and consumes it without taking any steps to repair the inroads he makes upon it. Gesenius and others take it as still descriptive of jealousy, and explain the words אֵין בְּשֹׁר, *the fool devoured by envy*, comparing with it ὁ θυμὸς καταβόησεν (Hom. Il. vi. 202). Against all these interpretations we urge that they are forced and unnatural, that some are against the genius of language, and some against the context. This will be seen from an analysis of the words of the verse, and their relation to each other, קָסִל (from קָסִל, *to be thick, fat, fleshy, to be inactive, lazy, or languid, either in body or mind*, as the latter is generally the result of the former) denotes *a sluggard, a fool, a sinner*, whose heart is overlaid with fat, and is obdurate, so that he is rendered dull and callous to the commandments of God (Deut. xxxii. 15; Ps. xvii. 10; lxxiii. 7; cxix. 70; Isa. vi. 10; comp. Prov. xv. 20; xix. 1; infra, ver. 17. al.). That the idea of inac-

6 better a handful of enjoyment than two handfuls of labour

tivity in labour, viz., עָלָא, is here intended, is evident from the immediately following words, וְזָקַן אֶת יָדָיו, *he folds his hands*, which are used as descriptive of a lazy man, i. e., עָלָא (comp. Prov. vi. 10; xxiv. 38), and not a fool, in the ordinary meaning of this word; and from the preceding verse, where the opposite character is described, viz., *one active and industrious*. This last remark also shows that קָסִל, *the slothful*, is not to be taken absolutely, but relatively; when compared with this wide-awake activity, impelled by envy, which is always on the alert, he, who is contented with enjoying what he has, without attempting to replenish what he consumes, is inactive, slothful. אָכַל בָּשָׂר, *to eat meat*, is frequently used in Scripture as indicative of an ample and delicate repast (Exod. xvi. 8; xxi. 28; Isa. xxii. 13; Ezek. xxxix. 17), just as the abstinence from it is mentioned in cases of humiliation and fasting (Dan. x. 3), and we have no right to depart from its natural signification here, and force upon it the sense of *consuming one's own flesh*, especially as the words, וְזָקַן אֶת יָדָיו, *vanity and striving after the wind*, predicated in the preceding verse of the enviously industrious, show that the words אָכַל בָּשָׂר, *eating his meat*, the predicate of the easy sluggard, are intended as an antithesis, the one *repining*, the other *enjoying*; just as the *enviously industrious* is contrasted with the *reposingly slothful*.

6. *Better a handful of enjoyment, &c.* Coheleth, therefore, submits that he who quietly enjoys his scanty patrimony, without harassing cares and useless pursuits after gain, is to be preferred to him who succeeds in amassing wealth, but cannot enjoy it for want of tranquillity of mind. This verse has shared in its interpretation the fate of the preceding one. The Vulg., Ibn Ezra, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, Reynolds, Mendelssohn, &c., as we have seen, put it

into the mouth of the sluggard, as an apology for his laziness; whilst Preston, Philippon, Elster, and others, maintain that it contains a recommendation of Coheleth to avoid both extremes, viz., envious and toilsome industry, and careless slothfulness, and to choose the middle course. But how such a middle course is to be got out of the words in this verse, I am at a loss to divine. קָסִל, *a handful of quiet*, manifestly describes the קָסִל, *sluggard*, who quietly enjoys his repast, as is evident from וְזָקַן אֶת יָדָיו, *labour and striving after the wind*, which depicts the וְזָקַן אֶת יָדָיו, *man of labour and dexterity*, in verse 4. Hence this verse must be taken as giving the estimate of the respective merits of the two classes described in verses 4 and 5. קָסִל, in both clauses is followed by מִן, *a handful*, and שְׁנֵי מִן, *two handfuls*, genitives of measure, and עֲמָלָא, *enjoyment*, and עֲמָלָא, *toil*, accusatives of the things measured (comp. אִם יִתֵּן לִי בָנָא מֵאֵל בִּירוֹ, *if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold*, Num. xxii. 18; קָלָא מִן קִרְכָּסָא, *a handful of meal*, 1 Kings xvii. 12; Judges vi. 38; Gesen. Lex., s. v., קָלָא; Gram. § 118; Ewald, § 287, h; so the Sept., Syriac, Knobel, Herzfeld, Ewald, Gesenius, De Wette, Heiligstedt, Hitzig, Stuart, Philippon, Elster, Hengstenberg, and most modern critics). The rendering of Symmachus, ματὰ ἀναπαύσεως, the Chaldee, Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, וְקָסִיל בְּנִיחָא; Vulg., *cum requie, cum labore*; Luther, mit Ruhe, mit Mühe; Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Version, the Authorised Version, *with quietness, with travail*, supplying a מִן before וְזָקַן, and עֲמָלָא, the accusative depending upon קָסִיל, are contrary to grammar. Auerbach ingeniously remarks that the difference between קָסִיל and וְזָקַן is, קָסִיל, *the hollow of the hand*, whilst the latter signifies the whole hand, including the fingers. וְזָקַן (from וְזָקַן, *to settle down, to rest*)

7 and striving after the wind And again I saw a vanity under
8 the sun; here is one who hath no one with him, hath not
even a son or brother, and yet there is no end to all his

denotes *quiet, rest*, and hence also *happiness, enjoyment, pleasure, delight*, from the great luxury which rest is to Orientals (comp. שְׁלוֹמֵךָ, *the enjoyment or delight of thy table*, Job xxxvi. 18, and *infra*, vi. 5 with 3, where it is used as a synonym with שָׁלוֹם in the sense of *good*, which meaning it frequently has in post-Biblical Hebrew. We need only refer to the well-known phrase, נָחַם לִי לֵאדָם, *it is good with that man*; and see also *infra*, ix. 17).

7. *And again I saw, &c.* From jealousy Coheleth proceeds to *avarice*, as the two features are intimately connected with each other; both are described as the cause of hard labour, undertaken in spite of the immutably fixed order of things, and as neglecting the enjoyment of the present, which is the only portion of man; the former is instigated to work by envying the possessions of others, whilst the latter is impelled to toil by an insatiable desire of filthy lucre. For the adverbial use of שָׁרָא see i. 7. The Vulg., CONSIDERANS REPERI ET ALIAM VANITATEM SUB SOLE, *considering I also found another vanity under the sun*, is a loose paraphrase, and an inconsistent departure from its tame rendering of the same phrase in verse 1.

8. *Here is one, &c.* The miser is now introduced. Here is a solitary being, without connection, either by blood or ties of friendship, to inherit his amassed wealth, yet is he actuated by the greedy love of money to toil incessantly, and does not endure two mouths in his house, or even suffer his own mouth to enjoy the fruit of his labours. The pronoun הָ, *to him*, from the second clause, must be supplied after שֵׁנִי, *second*, i. q., וְאֵין שֵׁנִי לוֹ, *and has not a second*. But who is meant by this *second*? According to St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, &c., it is *Christ*; according to Rashi,

Rashbam, &c., it is (אָדָם שֵׁנִי לִסְעִיר), *a companion or a partner in business*; according to Ibn Ezra, it is (שְׁדוּדָא עִיר כְּנָנְיוֹ), *a wife*; according to Holden, &c., it is *a son to inherit the fruit of his labours*; according to Bishop Reynolds, Knobel, &c., it is *a second generally, associate, wife, friend, or partner*; and, according to Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, &c., it is simply exegetical of the emphatic meaning of שֵׁנִי, viz., *one only*. The following verse, however, which unquestionably restricts it to the union of social polity, corroborates the opinion of Rashi and Rashbam, that *a partner* is thereby intended. וְאֵין, with the negative particle אֵין, gives intensity to the statement, i. e., *not even a son or a brother* (comp. *infra*, viii. 18; 2 Sam. xvii. 12, 13; Ps. xiv. 3; liii. 4; Ewald, § 352, b); as much as to say, not to find a companion or friend is strange enough, but *not even* to have a brother or son, which everybody has, this is indeed astonishing; and yet this solitary individual labours without end to amass wealth. For the *Quamets* under the וְ in וְאֵין, being used to join words in pairs, see ii. 23. Herzfeld regards the second וְ, before שֵׁנִי, as synonymous with וְ, *and*; but this is an unnecessary deviation from its meaning, and weakens the force of the passage; it is used as in the former clause for emphasis, shewing that this lonely being does not only labour incessantly, but that his greedy eye is *not even* satisfied with his great wealth. Owing to the apparent inconsistency of construing חֲשֹׁנִי, *sing.* with שֵׁנִי, *the dual*, 54 of Kennicott's MSS., the Sept., Chaldee, St. Jerome, the Syriac, and the Keri have שֵׁנִי in the *singular*. There is, however, no need of resorting to a different reading for rectifying this anomaly, since שֵׁנִי not unfrequently takes a *sing. fem. verb* after

labour, even his eyes are not satisfied with riches; and for whom do I labour and deny my soul any of my riches? this, 9 too, is vanity, and an evil business. Happier two than one, 10 because they have a good reward for their labour; for if one

it (comp. וְעֵינֶיךָ זָקָה, 1 Sam. iv. 15; 1 Kings xiv. 6. 12; Micah iv. 11; Gesen. § 148, 6; Ewald, § 317, a). For the phrase שָׂבַע עֵינַי, *to satiate the eye*, see i. 8.

And for whom do I labour, &c. To render the statement more striking and vivid, Coheleth places himself in the condition of such a friendless and childless miser, and exclaims, "If I were such a solitary being, for whom would I toil?" &c. For a similar instance of personification, see ver. 15; ii. 15. The Chaldee, however, supplies חֲשֹׁנִי לְבָנִי, *and does not say in his heart*, putting it into the mouth of the miser; so also the Vulgate, NEO RECOGITAT, DICENS: CUI LABORO? which is followed by Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Version, the Authorised Version, &c.; but this unnecessary insertion of words does not at all improve the sense. חָסֵר, *to be wanting*, intransitive, is, like all other verbs denoting *want or fulness*, construed with the accusative in Kal, and in Piel, the causative of Kal, with two accusatives, one of the person (חָסֵרְךָ), and the other of the thing or object, which is to be supplied from the noun חֲשֹׁנִי, as indicated by the *partitive* כֵּן (comp. שֵׁנִי מִחֲשֹׁנֶיךָ, *let him kiss me—i. e., שֵׁנִי, a kiss—of the kisses*, Song of Songs, i. 2; Ps. cxxxii. 11; Gesen. § 154, 3, c; Ewald, § 217, b, 1, b). The full construction would therefore be חָסֵר אֶת-חֲשֹׁנִי לְבָנִי, *followed by כֵּן, with the double accusative fully expressed*, also occurs in Ps. viii. 6; וְהִתְחַדְתָּ קֶסֶם מְאֹדִים, *and thou makest him want (הִתְחַדְתָּ, accusat. of person) but little (קֶסֶם, accusat. of thing or object) of God* (see Hupfeld, *in loco*). The opinion of Gesenius (Lex, s. v.), Herzfeld, Hengstenberg, Fürst (Lex, s. v.), &c., that חָסֵר is construed with כֵּן instead of the

accusative, is contrary to the *usus loquendi*. Equally objectionable is the artificial explanation of Knobel and Elster, that חֲשֹׁנִי מְאֹדִים, *Mangel von etwas weg lassen* ist prägnant gesagt für: *Mangel lassen und entfernt sein lassen*, u. s. v. For חָסֵר רַע, see i. 13.

9. *Happier two than one, &c.* This solitary and selfish miser, who thinks to increase his happiness by increasing his wealth, defeats by his own conduct the very object which he has in view. Since the alliance which he so much shuns, for fear of having his riches diminished and his happiness lessened, is the very thing which promotes happiness, inasmuch as two labouring together effect, by mutual counsel and assistance, much more than a solitary being could do, and have therefore "good reward for their conjoint labour." The abhorrence with which a lonely life was regarded among the Hebrews, and the high estimation in which friendship was held, gave rise to the following proverbs: — אוֹ חֲבֵרָתָא אוֹ מוֹתָא, *either friendship or death*, Talmud, Tanith, 23; אָדָם בְּלֹא חֲבֵרִים כְּשֹׂמֵל בְּלֹא יָמִין, *a man without friends is like a left hand without the right*, Mibchar Peninim (comp. Dufes, *Rabbinische Blumenlese*, p. 89). חָסֵר, like the Latin *quippe, qui*, has frequently a *causal* meaning (comp. Gen. xxx. 18, xxxiv. 27; Josh. iv. 7; Gesenius, Lex. s. v.).

10. *For if one fall, &c.* To illustrate the benefit accruing from social life, Coheleth adduces an example of two travelling together, one of whom happens to fall; and, because he has an associate, he has some one to help him up, of which the solitary being is deprived. So it is in the journey of life; union is strength; the misfortune of one is relieved by

13 not easily broken. Happier a poor and wise youth than an

miser, who shrinks from having a single individual with him, for fear of having his advantages lessened, is shewn that the larger the number of associates the greater the benefit. The alliance of *three* is mentioned, because this number was regarded as representing unity and completeness. Hence the complete adoration of God, both by his angels in heaven and man on earth, consisted in the invocation of a *threefold* "holy" on the part of the celestial beings (Is. vi. 3), and *three* annual visits to Jerusalem, and *three* daily prayers at home on the part of the terrestrial worshippers (Exod. xxiii. 14; Ps. lv. 18; Dan. vi. 11). חַיִּים is a later Hebrew form for חַיִּים, without the preposition (comp. Ewald, § 315, c).

13. *Happier a poor and wise youth, &c.* A fourth illustration, to shew the benefits accruing from sociableness, and the disadvantages arising from a solitary and selfish life. The full force of this comparison will be seen more easily if we bear in mind the esteem in which old age and youth were respectively held in the East. Owing to a natural feeling, as well as to the advantages connected with it, old age has always been held in reverence. In ancient days, when books were exceedingly scarce, and instruction and knowledge were obtained by oral communication, the aged, being the depositaries of the traditions of their fathers, having had intercourse with the wise men of preceding generations, and possessing large experience of their own, were naturally looked upon as the guides and teachers of the people. "With the aged," we are told, "is wisdom, and in length of days understanding" (Job xii. 12; xv. 10). Hence God himself, when appearing to Moses in the bush, and commissioning him to deliver Israel from bondage, enjoined the deliverer to "go and gather the aged of Israel," and communicate with them first (Exod. iii. 16; comp. also *ibid.* xxiv. 1; Numb. xi. 16).

The young, on the contrary, were taught to regard grey hairs as "a crown of glory," to rise from their seats when an old man entered the room (Lev. xix. 32; Prov. xxiii. 22; Sirach iii. 13, vi. 35, viii. 6), and to let him occupy the head of the table at meals (Baba-Bathra, 119; Biner, Realwörterbuch; Saalschütz, Archæologie der Hebräer, s. v., Alter; Smith, Dictionary of the Bible, s. v., age). Yet, notwithstanding all the privileges belonging to old age, a *young man though poor*, if wise and social, is to be esteemed more than the *hoary aged though rich*, if he be a lonely, foolish, and incorrigible miser. This idea is beautifully illustrated in a Midrashic legend. The coin which Abraham bequeathed to his posterity as a memorial, we are told, has engraven on one side a hoary aged male and female, and on the other a young man and woman, to teach us that, on the one side, man may be old in mind and young in body, and, on the other, that he may be young in mind and old in body (*vide* Tanshuma on Chayeh Sarah, p. 27; Hamburger, Geift der Hagada, s. v., Alter); or, as the Book of Wisdom has it, "Honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that which is measured by number of years, but wisdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age" (iv. 8, 9). Much ingenious speculation has been expended in the attempts to divine whom Coheleth meant by the old and young kings. From the Chaldee, which merely refers to Abraham and Nimrod, Jeroboam and Rehoboam, and from the Midrash and Rashi, who simply adduce Joseph, David, and Zedekiah to illustrate the declaration before us, modern commentators have affirmed that Coheleth alludes to these parties. Others, again, have maintained, with equal assurance, that Amaziah and Joash (so Kaiser), or the high priest Onias and his nephew Joseph, who flour-

old and foolish king who does not as yet know to be admonished. For a prisoner may go from prison to a throne, whilst a king may become a beggar in his own

riched 246-221, s. c. are meant (Hitzig). But these expositors might, with equal propriety, endeavour to fix the name of the solitary miser depicted in verse 8, or try to identify the two social individuals mentioned in verse 9. If it be admitted that the sacred writer exposes there an evil feature prevalent in his days, why not concede the same thing here? חַיִּים, prop. *NATUS, one born, a child, a boy*, and also *a young man* (comp. Gen. iv. 23, where it is in parallelism with *man*; Gen. xxxvii. 30, xlii. 22, where Joseph, seventeen years old, is called חַיִּים; and 1 Kings xii. 8, where even the friends of Rehoboam's youth, who, according to xiv. 21, was forty-one years old, are called חַיִּים). Though the form חַיִּים (from חַי, *to be bent down, to be low, poor*) only occurs here and in ix. 15, 16, yet its signification, *poor, wretched*, is firmly established by the use of other forms of this root in the Old Testament (comp. חַיִּים, *poverty*, Deut. viii. 9; חַיִּים, Isa.

xl. 20); by the meaning of חַיִּים, *to make poor*, in Syriac, and other cognate languages, and by the renderings of the ancient versions and modern lexicographers. Desvieux's rendering of it by *experienced*, and Hodgson's by *feeble*, are therefore to be rejected. חַיִּים, *king*, is used tropically for one *possessing grandeur or riches*, as is evident from its antithesis חַיִּים, *poor*, and from the contrast so minutely observed in the other terms, viz., חַיִּים, *old man*, and חַיִּים, *young man*, חַיִּים, *wise man*, and חַיִּים, *fool*.

Who does not as yet know, &c. i. e., who, though having attained to so advanced an age, has led such a selfish and solitary life that he did not gain a kind friend or companion to counsel or admonish him. יָדַע, *to know*, i. e., *to come to know, to learn*, as in iii. 12. יָדַע, *to shine, to have light*; Niphal, *to be enlightened*,

to be instructed, or warned, to beware (comp. *infra*, xii. 12; Ezek. xxxiii. 4, 5). The Vulg., QUI NESCIIT PRÆVIDERE IN POSTERUM, is a loose paraphrase.

14. *For a prisoner may go, &c.* The assertion made in the preceding verse is now corroborated, by adverting to the fact that poverty and riches may change their owners. The history of all nations shews that some, who have been born in meanness and poverty, have, by wisdom and magnanimity, raised themselves to honour and riches; whilst others, who have inherited kingdoms and renown, have, by their foolish and selfish conduct, been reduced to dishonour and poverty. חַיִּים, *for*, assigns a reason for the preference given to the poor but wise youth. The subject of חַיִּים, the third person singular, must be supplied from the action or condition described, i. e., חַיִּים, *a prisoner may go from prison to reign* (*vide ver. 12*). חַיִּים stands for חַיִּים, *dungeon* (from חַיִּים, *to bind, to put in prison*), as is indicated by the Quametz under the ח, the radical ח in the feeble verbs חַיִּים is not unfrequently dropped (compare חַיִּים for חַיִּים, 2 Chron. xxii. 5 with 2 Kings viii. 28; חַיִּים for חַיִּים, Ezek. xx. 37; Gesenius and Fürst, Lexicons, s. v. ח; Ewald, § 53, c, § 86, b); so the Sept., Sym., Syriac, Vulg., Pashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Version, the Auth. Version, De Wette, Knobel, Herzfeld, Gesenius, and most modern commentators. The derivation of it from חַיִּים, *to turn aside*, hence *revolters, political rebels* (Parkhurst, Holden), *outcasts, menials* (Ewald), *fugitives* (Hitzig, Stuart, &c.), are contrary to the punctuation. The expression *out of the dungeon*, is used figuratively for *low condition, abject circumstances*. Whilst a king may become, &c.

15 kingdom. I see all the living who walk under the sun,

As the *first* clause of this verse began with the *causative* יָ, to assign a reason for the superiority ascribed to the poor but wise youth in the *first* part of the foregoing verse, so this *second* clause also begins with the *causative* יָ, to assign a reason for the inferiority ascribed to the rich but foolish king in the *second* part of the preceding verse. לֹלֵךְ, *to be born*, like *γενέσθαι* in Greek, also denotes *to be made, to become*, and is well explained by the Chaldees אֲחִיעֶזֶר, Rashi נעשה ולשון רחוק הוא, Herzfeld and Philippon. Here, again, the subject of the verb is to be supplied from the tenor of the passage, i. q., נָם בְּמִלְכּוֹתָיָא קִלְךָ לֹלֵךְ נָם, *in his very kingdom a king may become a beggar*. Simple and obvious as the sense of this clause appears, yet interpreters greatly differ in their explanation of it. Thus the Chaldees אֲחִיעֶזֶר יָרִים אִין בְּיוֹמֵי, *for even in the days of Abraham's reign Nimrod became poor in the world* still refers בְּמִלְכּוֹתָיָא to the young man, and takes לֹלֵךְ as the only part in this verse belonging to the foolish king, i. e., "for during his reign (i. e., the young man's) he (i. e., the old king) became poor." Rashi refers it entirely to the youth (הוא נעשה כמנהג) כי נָם בְּמִלְכּוֹתָיָא הוא נעשה כמנהג נעשה אצל החכמים כמנהג (הרש"ם), i. e., "for he was worthy to go from the prison to reign, since even in his own kingdom he made himself poor." Ibn Ezra, again, who is followed by Mendelssohn and Preston, maintains that it is explanatory of the preceding part of this verse, הוֹמָה, אִין אֵל הוֹמָה, *יצא החכם מרבו להשך כי נָם הוֹמָה שְׂהוּמָה מִלְךְ נִלְךְ* רש, כִּנְיָן עִירִים יִצְאוּ מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי at the origin of this wise youth, since this old man, who is king, was also born poor, according to the passage, "naked came I out from my mother's womb" (Job i. 21); whilst Rashbam refers the first part of this verse to the old and foolish king, who, like the poor and wise young man, came out poor from his mother's womb (בית אִמִּירִים), and the clause before us

to his son born during his reign, who is as poor and as foolish as himself. Desvieux renders it, "and because he was born poor in the kingdom that became his;" Hodgson, Knobel, De Wette, Heiligstedt, &c., "yet in his own kingdom was he born poor;" Vaihinger, "yea even in his own kingdom he was born poor." But all these renderings violate the relationship of the two causal particles at the beginning of the two clauses of this verse, and destroy their connection with the two characters referred to in the foregoing verse. The exposition we defend is substantially the same as that of Symmachus, the Vulgate, Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Version, the Auth. Version, Reynolds, Hengstenberg, &c.

15. *I see all the living, &c.* Here, again, Coheleth transports himself into the midst of the scene which he depicts, in order to render the illustration more vivid and striking. So great is the popularity of this social and wise young man, that, notwithstanding his humble origin, Coheleth can see all the people desert the standard of the old and foolish king, in spite of his high birth, and flock to this upstart. Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, Desvieux, &c., connect עִם הַיָּלֵךְ with הַיָּלֵךְ, i. e., *walking with the young man*; but this is against the accents, and against the article before הַיָּלֵךְ, which clearly shews that it is in apposition to הַיָּלֵךְ, and that הַיָּלֵךְ is the same as הַיָּלֵךְ in vii. 11; grammatically, therefore, the predicate can only begin with עִם, before which the *substantive verb*, as usual, is omitted (so the Sept., Vulg., the Syriac, the Chaldee, the Geneva Version, the Authorised Version, and most modern commentators). Why Holden says that "the authorised translation is inadmissible," I cannot divine; since, in English as in Hebrew, the verb substantive is frequently omitted. עִם, with the substantive verb implied or ex-

16 with the sociable youth who standeth up in his place; there is no end to all the people, to all over whom he ruleth.

pressed, is used for *being on the side of one, or belonging to his party, to succour, to help him* (comp. אֲחִיעֶזֶר, *God is with thee, i. e., to help thee*, Gen. xxi. 22; אֲחִיעֶזֶר, *I shall be with thee*, ibid. xxvi. 8; and אֲחִיעֶזֶר, Matt. xii. 30). Ewald and Heiligstedt take עִם as denoting *comparison*, and translate the verse, Doch, ich sah all die Lebenden, so unter der Sonne wandeln, in Vergleich mit dem Jüngling, dem Zweiten, der statt seiner herrschen sollte, which they explain, auch dieß Glück ist näher betrachtet nicht eben zu beneiden, sobald man ihn nur mitten im Strom der Weltgeschichte denkt (עִם wie ii. 16; vii. 11) wo sein Andenken bald erlöschen wird, *yet even this fortune* (of this young man who has thus raised himself to the throne) *will not be envied if we examine it more closely, and bear in mind that he is in the stream of the world's history* (עִם), *where his memory will soon be extinguished*. But this explanation involves a most unnatural ellipsis; besides, as Elster rightly remarks, had this been the meaning of the sacred writer, he would not have said, "I saw all the living in comparison with this youth," but "I considered this youth in comparison with all the living." Still more strange is Hodgson's rendering, "I contemplate all the armies which, with the heir, are in motion under the sun." The article in הַיָּלֵךְ shews that it refers to the young man spoken of in ver. 13. That הַיָּלֵךְ denotes here one who *forms a second, i. e., one endowed with the feelings and happy knack of associating himself with people, the sociable*, is evident from verses 8 and 10, where it is used in contrast with אֲחִיעֶזֶר, *the solitary being*. The common rendering of עִם by *second, i. e., the man who follows the old one, regarding it as an "explanative,"* so far from explaining, only obscures the text, which would be

far more intelligible if this so-called explicative were omitted. עִם, *to stand up*, in the sense of ascending the throne, only occurs in later Hebrew (comp. Dan. viii. 23, xi. 2, 3, 20). The pronoun in הַיָּלֵךְ refers to the old and foolish king, whom this upstart succeeds.

16. *There is no end, &c.* A further description of the great popularity of this wise youth: the people that gather around him, and whose sovereign he becomes, are innumerable. The phrase, לֹא עֵץ, *there is no end to anything*, is of such frequent occurrence, and the ל before the object so clearly points out the thing described, that we are utterly astonished how Tremellius, De Dieu, Patrick, Reynolds, Henry, &c., could insert the word "sickleness" before people, as the object designed by the sacred writer, especially as לֹא עֵץ, *there is no end to all the people*, is so manifestly intended to correspond to לֹא עֵץ, *all the living*, in the preceding verse. It is equally surprising that Mendelssohn should explain it, "there is no end, in the opinion of all the people, to all that they have in their own time," which is followed by Preston, taking the ל in לֹא עֵץ as denoting *according to, in the opinion of*, and לֹא עֵץ to mean *in their own time*, and regarding the whole clause as describing the dissatisfaction and impatience of the people with what they have in their own time, and constantly wishing for new changes, as this would require לֹא עֵץ. Besides, the second לֹא before אֲחִיעֶזֶר, as the ל shews, is still depending upon עִם, and must therefore be taken in the same sense as the first, which is also against the artificial renderings of Herzfeld, sein Ende nahm allem Volke ein Jeder, der ihnen gegenwärtig war, and Philippon, sein Ende war des Volkes, das früher war, auf Jedes Seite. The pronoun אֲחִיעֶזֶר, as often, merely

Yet those who will live afterwards shall not rejoice in him, for 17 even this is vanity and striving after the wind. Keep thy

serves as a *sign of relation*, giving to the suffix *לְפָנָיו* a relative signification, i. e., *before whom, whose*; and, in such a case, is separated from the word which it thus affects, by one or more words (comp. *אֲשֶׁר הָיָה עִם*, Gen. xiii. 3; Gesen. § 123, 1; Ewald, § 331, c). *הָיָה*, *he was*, therefore refers to the youth. The phrase *הָיָה לְפָנָיו*, *to be before any one*, means *to be his leader*, just as *הָיָה אַחֲרָיו*, *to be behind any one*, means *to follow one as being led* (1 Kings xvi. 21), and as *יָצָא וַיָּבֹא לְפָנָיו*, *to go out and in before one* means *to command, to lead*, Numb. xxvii. 17; 1 Sam. xviii. 16; 2 Chron. i. 10; Mic. ii. 13; Gesen. Lex., s. v., *פָּנָיו*. The Chaldee has therefore rightly rendered it *וְהָיָה לְפָנָיו*, *whose leader he was*, so also Dathe, Holden, Knobel, De Wette, Gesenius, Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c. The Vulgate, *infinitus numerus est populi omnium, qui fuerunt ante eum*; Luther, und des Volke, das vor ihm ging, war kein Ende, und des, das ihm nachging; Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible, "as for the people that have been before him, and that come after him, they are innumerable;" are contrary to the text.

Yet those who will live hereafter. Having been led to shew the advantage of sociableness and magnanimity over selfishness, that the former may raise the meanest subject to royal dignity, whilst the latter may reduce to beggary even a potentate, Coheleth recurs to his grand theme that, however great the position and the renown which this obscure individual may acquire, this will not exempt him from the common fate of all men. He, too, will soon be gone, will quit the theatre upon whose stage his prudence enabled him to play so grand a part, never to be remembered by posterity. Thus Coheleth returns to the deplorable fact, which is the burden of the

prologue (i. 11) and of the whole book. For the *adversative* meaning of *וְכֵן*, *yet, nevertheless*, see ii. 14; for *וְהָיָה לְפָנָיו*, *those that will live afterwards, posterity, future generations*, see i. 11, and for *וְהָיָה*, see i. 17.

17. *Keep thy feet, &c.* Since all things are thus under the control of an Omnipotent Power, so that no exertion of ours can secure for us lasting good, or avert the evils common to all men, Coheleth submits that the best thing we can do is to submit to the laws of God, and serve him acceptably upon whom we inevitably depend. In speaking of the worship of God, the sacred writer refers to three things—1. *The going to the Temple*, taken up in this verse; 2. *Prayer*, discussed in v. 1, 2; and 3. *Vows*, in 3–6. Like all other terms employed in ordinary life to describe the physical world, the expressions *way or path, foot, and walking*, have been transferred to our moral life. Hence the *way of the Lord*, i. e., the path of obedience ordained by and leading to the Lord, wherein the righteous walk, thus also becoming their way (Ps. i. 6, v. 9, xviii. 21, xxv. 4, xxvii. 11, cxix. 1. 33, cxxviii. 1), which is through Christ, who is "the way" (John xiv. 6), and leads to happiness (Matt. vii. 14). Sinners have their way, which runs counter to the commandments of God (Judg. ii. 19; Job xxii. 15; Ps. i. 1. 6, cxlvi. 9; Prov. ii. 12, iv. 19, xii. 26), and leads to misery (Prov. vii. 27; Matt. vii. 13). Obedience is therefore described as "*running in the way of God's commandments*" (Ps. cxix. 32); and, as the *foot* is the chief instrument in this race, its attitude and movements are used to indicate the moral acts of man. Speaking of his obeying God's Word, the Psalmist says that he was enabled to do so because "I have refrained my feet from every evil way" (Ps. cxix. 101); and the Apostle

feet when thou goest to the house of God, for it is nearer to obey than to offer the sacrifice of the disobedient, as they

Paul, in exposing the conduct of those who dissembled, says, "When I saw that they walked not uprightly (with a straight foot, as the original has it), according to the truth of the Gospel" (Gal. ii. 14). It is therefore evident that, by the admonition *keep thy feet* is meant that they should be *straight, and running in the way of God's commandments*; or, in other words, that the individual should be obedient; and that it has no reference whatever to the ancient custom of disalcation when entering upon the performance of religious ordinances (Exod. iii. 5; Josh. v. 15), as is affirmed by the Midrash Mede, Patrick, Holden, &c. The vowels in *וְהָיָה* are intended to shew that the word is *singular*, hence the Masoretic note tells us that the *Yod* is superfluous, which the Sept., Vulg., Syriac, Chaldee, many of Kennicott's MSS., and some modern critics follow; but, like most of the *Keris*, this emendation is unnecessary, and has probably arisen from a desire to make it conform to Prov. i. 15, iv. 26.

For it is nearer to obey, &c. As regards going to the Temple, Coheleth remarks that to keep one's feet in the way of obedience, which prevents doing evil, is a much nearer way to appear before God than the roundabout path of sinning, and bringing sin-offerings. The adjective *קָרִיב*, like its opposite *רָחוֹק* (comp. Prov. xxxi. 10), is used for *comparison* (comp. *קָרִיב מִמֶּנִּי*, *nearer than I*, Ruth. iii. 12). The rendering of Aquila (*καὶ πληγὴν ὁρᾷς ὡς πληγὴν*), the Vulg., St. Jerome (*et appropinqua ut audias*),

the Syriac (*ܩܪܝܒܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ*),

the Chaldee (*ܩܪܝܒܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ*), Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Version, the Authorised Version, Hodgson, Rosenmüller, De Wette, &c., and *be nearer, or draw nigh to hear, &c.*, taking *קָרִיב* as an

infinitive absol., with an *imperative signification*, and of Knobel, Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, &c., *to draw near to hear is better than, &c.*, who not only take *קָרִיב* as an *infinitive absol.*, but also retain its literal meaning, are contrary to the uniform usage of *קָרִיב*, which never occurs as an *infinitive absol.*, but is always an *adjective*, or is used for *comparison*. Still more objectionable is the explanation of Rashbam (*הָיָה לְפָנָיו קָרִיב לְשִׁמְעוֹ תַּחֲלִיף*), *and God will be nearer to thee to hear thy prayer than to the bringing of a sacrifice by a fool* and Ibn Ezra (*יָרִיד קָרִיב לְקַבֵּל בְּרִיךְ*), *and the Holy One will be nearer to accept thy prayer, if offered sincerely, than the sacrifices which fools bring*), which, though admitting *קָרִיב* to be used for *comparison*, impose too harsh an ellipsis upon the text. Had this been the meaning of the sacred writer, he would undoubtedly have written *וְהָיָה לְפָנָיו*, *as frequently is used in a moral sense (vide ver. 5) for sinner, transgressor, disobedient*, thus forming a contrast with *וְהָיָה*, *to obey*.

As they who obey know not, &c. This clause is explanatory of the remark made in the preceding one, shewing how it is that obedience is the nearer way to God. Those that obey can appear at once before God, as they have not to go and bring a sin-offering first, for they know not how to commit sin. Referring *וְהָיָה לְפָנָיו*, *they know not, to* *וְהָיָה לְפָנָיו*, *the disobedient*, commentators have experienced the greatest difficulty in explaining this clause. According to the Hagadic explanation (*וְהָיָה לְפָנָיו*), *vide Midrash in loco*), it is to be rendered, *for fools know not to distinguish evil, i. e., from good*; hence the Chaldee, *וְהָיָה לְפָנָיו*, *the two readings of the Sept., ὅτι οὐκ εἰδότες τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ κακόν*, and hence also the rendering of the Syriac,

v. 1 who obey know not to do evil. Do not hasten on thy mouth, and do not urge thy heart to utter words before God, for God is in heaven and thou art upon earth, therefore let

מִלֵּךְ לֹא יִשְׁפָּט לְמַעַן יִשְׁפָּט

for they know not to do or distinguish good; but as מִלֵּךְ is a well-known phrase, which uniformly denotes doing or practising evil, this Hagadic interpretation must be rejected. To escape this, the Vulg. and St. Jerome, who are followed by Luther, Coverdale, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, Hodgson, Desvieux, De Wette, &c., render it for they know not that they do evil, or when they do this evil, or what evil they do, which is interpreted, "for they make no conscience of or do not concern themselves about doing evil, or they understand not when they do it;" but this interpretation is quite as unwarranted as the former, inasmuch as יִשְׁפָּט by itself never signifies to concern oneself, to enquire; and as the infinit. לֵשׁוֹת cannot grammatically be translated that, or what they do. Still more untenable are the explanations of Rashi הכסיל מבין שהוא עושה רע לעצמו *the fool knows not that he does himself injury*, Rashbam, שהר אינם יודעים כסילים, ועל כן הם מוסיפים לעשות רע, *for these fools know not how to do good works, therefore they do evil*, and of those mentioned by Ibn Ezra (ש' אומרים כי מירש רע כמו רצון), *they know not to do His will, or pleasure*, who are followed by Pagninus, Mercer, &c., taking יִשְׁפָּט as synonymous with יָרָא (Ps. cxxxix. 2. 17). Ibn Ezra, indeed, eludes all these difficulties, by supplying יָרָא, i. e., יִשְׁפָּט, which is followed by the Bishops' Bible, *for they know nought but to do evil*; but an omission or ellipsis of the most important word in the clause, which transforms good into evil, cannot be imagined. Neither can the forced renderings, zu nichte werden die, die nur frevel zu üben wissen, *destroyed shall they be who know nought but to do evil* (Kaiser, Schmidt,

Nachtigal); denn sie verstehen nicht traurig zu sein, *for they know not how to be sad* (Hitzig and Stuart), be reconciled with the *usus loquendi* or the context. The easiest solution, therefore, is the one suggested by Herzfeld and Philippon, who refer יִשְׁפָּט, *they know not*, to the subject implied in לֵשׁוֹת, to obey, i. e., those that obey commit no sin, as the subject of the action is frequently supplied from the act (see verses 12 and 14).

1. Do not hasten, &c. From the caution given how to appear before God, Coheleth passes to the mode in which our requests should be made known to him. Two things are to be observed in offering up our prayers. We are, in the first place, not to hurry on our mouth to speak as much and as fast as it can; and secondly, we are not to allow our heart to produce its thoughts precipitately; we are to exercise reverence and godly fear in the manner, and forethought and discretion in the matter of our supplications; both our words and our thoughts are to be simple and few at a time. If those who appear before earthly potentates arrange their thoughts and words in an intelligent manner and in small compass, how much more ought we to do it, as we ought to remember the infinite distance between the Majesty who is enthroned in heaven, and his subjects upon earth. Fewness of words, in the presence of our superiors, indicates a due reverence for their elevated position, and a modest acknowledgment of our inferiority. Hence the advice of Sirach, "If thou be among great men, make not thyself equal with them, and when aged men are in a place, use not many words" (xxxii. 9), "use not much speech in the assembly of elders, and multiply not words in thy prayer" (vii. 14), and the injunction in the Talmud, לעולם היו דבריו של אדם מועטין

2 thy words be few; moreover, dreaming cometh through the multitude of things, and foolish talk through the multitude

לְמִי הַקִּיבָה, *the words of a man should always be few in the presence of God* (Berachoth, 61, a), based upon this verse, which our Saviour also urged his disciples to observe (Matt. vi. 7). יִשְׁפָּט, like the Greek μὴ, is hortatory, and is best translated do not, whilst יָרָא, like the Greek οὐ, οὐκ, expresses a direct and absolute negative (Ges. § 127, 8, c; Ewald, § 320, a). יָרָא, intransitive in Kal, to be afraid, to flee in trepidation, to be in haste, is causative in Piel (comp. Ps. ii. 5, lxxxiii. 6; Job xxii. 10); the prepositions לָהּ here, and בָּ in vii. 2, with which it is construed, express the weight and constraint included in the idea of driving or hastening one onwards (compare Ewald, § 217, i); אֶל־הַקִּיבָה therefore means, do not cause thy mouth to hurry or run, referring to the rapid utterance of a multitude of words, whilst אֶל־הַלֵּב, and do not urge on thy heart, refers to speaking quickly and precipitately. The Vulgate, *ne temere quid loquaris*, Luther, *sei nicht schnell mit deinem Munde*, which is followed by Coverdale (*be not hasty with thy mouth*), the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, and many modern commentators, is contrary to the causative signification of יָרָא. לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים, before God, is a well-known formula, describing the place where God is present, his sanctuary (Exod. xvi. 9, xviii. 12; Deut. xiv. 26, xv. 20), hence the phrase בְּרִצְוֹתָהּ, to appear before the Eternal, which describes those who go up to the sanctuary (Exod. xxiii. 15; Ps. xlii. 3; Isa. i. 12; Ewald, § 217, l). The plural קִצְפִּים only occurs once more in Ps. cix. 8, הַיָּדִי קִצְפִּים, let his days be few; generally the singular is used (comp. Gen. xlviii. 9, קָצָה וָיָמִים, few and evil, Gen. xlviii. 9; Jerem. xlii. 2; Neh. ii. 12; Ewald, § 296, d).

2. Moreover, dreaming, &c. Another reason to enforce the caution given

in the preceding verse. Not only does the reverence due to an ordinary sovereign require of us to be simple and brief in our thoughts and words, when we address the King of Kings, but the evil resulting from engaging in too many things, or speaking too much on any occasion, forbids us to pursue such a line of conduct in the presence of the Majesty of heaven. For surely, if engaging the mind in a variety of things brings it into a dreamy and confused state, and if indulging the tongue in voluble talk engenders folly, frothy and wordy addresses to God must be an evil. As יִשְׁפָּט gives an additional reason, it must be rendered moreover. וְהַלֵּם denotes the series of thoughts occupying the mind of a sleeping person, as well as the idle thoughts entertained in a wakeful state, hence extravagances, incoherent conceits, follies, which arise from allowing the faculties to dwell upon a multitude of things at a time (vide ver. 6); and the בָּ in בְּרִצְוֹתָהּ, following a verb of coming, may either denote coming with something or through it. Accordingly, וְהַלֵּם בְּרִצְוֹתָהּ may either be translated, moreover, a dream cometh with a multitude of things, i. e., it brings with it, is attended with, or makes its appearance under a confused multitude of objects; and קוֹל קָטִיל בְּרִצְוֹת דְּבָרִים, the voice of the fool cometh with a multitude of words, i. e., comes out in an incoherent quantity of words (the Chaldee, Ibn Ezra, Mendelssohn, Gesenius, Noyes, Preston, &c.); or, dreaming cometh through a multitude of things, the voice of a fool through a multitude of words, so the Vulg., Rashbam, Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, and many modern commentators, which we prefer, as it is more in accordance with the scope of the passage. These two parts of the verse are taken by

3 of words. When thou vowest a vow to God, hesitate not to pay it, for fools have no fixed will; pay that which thou hast

the Chaldees, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Reynolds, Mendelssohn, Hodgson, Holden, Knobel, De Wette, Noyes, Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c., as including a comparison, i. e., "just as is the case with the one, so it is (1) with the other." But this has arisen from ignoring the fact that *two* distinct objects are mentioned in the preceding verse, i. e., the multiplication of words as well as of things, the one connected with (פִּי) the mouth, and the other with (לֵב) the heart, and that the two clauses in this verse refer to those two objects respectively. Besides, our explanation not only leaves to the 1 its natural meaning, but solves the otherwise inexplicable sixth verse. For כָּן, see i. 13; Symmachus (ἀποδείκνυται ὁμοίως δὲ πάλιν ἀνομιὰς) mistook it for כָּן. פִּי, voice, by metonymy here and ver. 5, speech, prattling. לֵב, prop. a noun, is also used as an adjective (comp. לֵב פֶּסֶל, a foolish man, Prov. xiv. 7).

3. When thou vowest, &c. Having spoken of the requisite state of mind when going to the Temple, and of the reverence and godly fear to be exercised in it, Coheleth now speaks of the conduct of worshippers when out of it. In the Temple, standing before the Lord, and stimulated by the conviction that a self-imposed sacrifice has a special merit in the sight of God, vows were frequently made to do or not to do certain things, which the worshipper sometimes refused to perform, after leaving the scene of religious excitement, as the sacrifice appeared too great upon calm reflection. Such voluntary promises to God obtained at a very early period of religious life. Jacob, we are told, made a solemn vow to devote himself to God, if the Lord would bring him home safely (Gen. xxviii. 20). These self-imposed vows consist of two kinds—I. Positive (פְּקִידָה), wherein things are

consecrated for religious purposes.

1. Men, who are to be redeemed according to certain prices fixed for different ages and sexes; a boy from a month to five years, at five shekels, a girl at three shekels; a boy, from five to twenty years, at twenty shekels, and a girl at ten; a man, from twenty to sixty, at fifty shekels, and a woman at thirty shekels; a man above sixty, fifteen shekels, and a woman ten: if the person is poor, the value is proportionately lessened (Levit. xxvii. 3-8). 2. Animals, which could only be redeemed when the animal vowed was unclean, and hence was unfit for sacrifice (ibid. 9-13); and 3. Houses or fields, which had also to be valued by the priest, and could be redeemed. II. NEGATIVE (פְּקִידָה), wherein one promised to abstain from enjoying or doing a certain thing, which was solemnly binding upon all, except a daughter, when still under the roof of her father, and a wife, whose vow the father or husband could disannul the day it was made, but not later. Though the Bible nowhere regards vows as duties, but, on the contrary, distinctly declares that he who makes no vows has not neglected any duty (Deut. xxiii. 23), yet it demands that what has thus been voluntarily promised should be strictly performed (Deut. xxiii. 22-24). פְּקִידָה, at the beginning of this verse, corresponding to פְּקִידָה in iv. 17, shews that another part of Divine worship, different to that described in verses 1 and 2, is here intended. For the construction פְּקִידָה, see i. 3.

For fools have no fixed will, i. e., it is only fools who waver in their determination, and do not know their own will. The Chaldees (לֵב פְּקִידָה), the Vulg. (displacet enim ei infidelis et stulta promissio), Rashi (אין חפץ הקיצה ברשעים הנודרים יאין), and Rashbam, who are followed by Luther, Coverdale, the

4 vowed. Better that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou 5 shouldest vow and not pay. Do not suffer thy mouth to

Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, and most modern commentators, take פְּקִידָה as the predicate of God. But had this been the sense of the passage, the words supplied by Rashi would undoubtedly have been in the text, or we should at least have had פְּקִידָה instead of פְּקִידָה. In addition to this grammatical difficulty, it is to be urged that the statement, God has no pleasure in fools, is too trivial, and tamely anticipates the forcible declaration upon this subject in verse 5, its appropriate place. The Sept. (ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν εὐλαβία ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ), St. Jerome (quia non est voluntas in insipientibus), Ibn Ezra (אין חפץ בִּי אֵין חפץ בִּי אֵין חפץ בִּי), Desvoeux, Mendelssohn, Herzfeld, Preston, Philppson, &c., have therefore rightly taken פְּקִידָה as the subject to פְּקִידָה.

4. Better that thou, &c. Since vows are not enjoined in the Word of God, and he who makes none is guilty of no dereliction of duty; and since, once made, vows are as binding as oaths, it is the height of delusion to suppose that God would be pleased with a mere promise for which he did not ask, when the non-fulfilment of it involves a violation of his law. Better, far better, not to vow at all, than to vow and not to pay. For the injunction here, see Deut. xxiii. 21-23. The Talmud also cautions against rash vows, and tries to prevent their frequent occurrence, by minutely interpreting the law respecting them (Numb. vi.), and by rigidly enforcing their payment (comp. Tr. Nazir). Hence it is related of Simon the Just (ibid. iv. 6), that because vows are often made rashly and afterwards regretted, and the sacrifice is not given with a willing and pure heart, he said; "I have never in my life eaten of the sin-offering brought by a Nazir who became defiled, except of one brought by a very handsome youth, with

richly-curved hair, who came from the South. 'My son,' said I to him, 'what led thee to determine to destroy such beautiful hair?' 'I tended my father's flock,' quoth he, 'and as I went to draw water I saw my reflection in it, and forthwith the evil spirit (vanity) laid hold of me and wanted to ruin me; I exclaimed, Miserable being! why be proud of a property which does not belong to thee? thou wilt soon become the portion of maggots and worms! By the Temple, I will cut it off as a sacrifice to God!' I stood up and kissed the youth's head, and said, 'May many in Israel be like thee; thou hast indeed done according to the words of the law, and made the vow for God.'" Would that there were many among those that profess to follow a higher standard of morality, who, if their right eye offended them, or their right arm, would be as ready to pluck it out or cut it off, and cast it from them! For the use of פְּקִידָה instead of פִּי, compare 2 Sam. xii. 6, with ver. 10, where פְּקִידָה and פִּי are interchanged (Fürst, Lex. s. v., פִּי, 5; Ewald, § 336, a).

5. Do not suffer thy mouth, &c. From the positive, Coheleth proceeds to the negative vows. If an individual has once made a vow to abstain from eating certain food, or from indulging in certain pleasures, he is not to allow his mouth, by partaking of these abjured things, to cause his flesh to sin in gratifying

its desires. פִּי, to give, like פִּי in Syriac, δίδωμι in Greek, and dare in Latin, also denotes to permit, to allow, to suffer, and is construed with the accus. of the object and the infu. c. 1 (comp. אֵין חפץ לְפִי לְחַמֵּץ, I suffered not my mouth to sin, Job xxxi. 30; Gen. xx. 6; Judges i. 34). לְחַמֵּץ, the Hiphil of חָמַץ, to sin, is to cause to sin, and is rightly rendered so by the

Lord's portion," xvii. 17 (comp. also Tobit v. 6; Targum on the Song of Songs, i. 2; Ibn Ezra and Gesen. on Isa. xxiv. 2). We therefore find that when Joshua advanced on Jericho, and saw the defending angel, he immediately exclaimed, "Art thou ours, or our adversary's?" (v. 13), and the angel replied that he came as the Prince of the Eternal's host; it was Michael, the defender of the Jews, and not the guardian angel of the adversary (comp. Rashi and Kimchi, *in loco*). Hence we also find Michael, the prince and guardian angel of the Jews, come to support Daniel against the guardian angel of Persia, who is to be overthrown by the guardian angel of Greece (comp. Dan. x. 13. 21; and St. Jerome and Ibn Ezra, *in loco*); and hence the four guardian angels of the four monarchies which Zecharias saw (comp. Zech. vi. 1-8, the Targum, Rashi, and Ibn Ezra, *in loco*).

Then comes the innumerable company of presence-angels, since every individual has a guardian angel as well as every nation. Thus Targum Jonathan on Gen. xxiii. 10, says, *גִּיּוֹן בֶּן זַמְרִי קָבַר אֶת־יִצְחָק לִי הִי מְבִיחָא אֲנִי*, for this reason I saw the benignity of thy face, and it is to me like the sight of the face of thy angel (see also Rashi on this passage). Christ, in speaking of the care and tenderness we ought to manifest for children, says that their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. xviii. 10), upon which St. Jerome remarks: *MAGNA DIGNITAS ANIMARUM, UT UNA QUÆQUE HABEAT AB ORTU NATIVITATIS IN CUSTODIAM SUI ANGELOM DELEGATUM, great is the dignity of these little ones, for every one of them has from his very birth an angel delegated to guard him* (Pata. de Angelis, ii. c. 6). When St. Peter was chained in prison, his angel released him (Acts xii. 7-11); and when he knocked at the door, the damsel, who had recognised his voice, and wished to let him in, was told that it was his angel (*ibid.* xii. 14, 15).

Then there are angels who preside over all the phenomena of nature; an angel presides over the sun (Rev. xix. 17); angels guard the storm and lightning (Ps. civ. 4; Heb. i. 7); four angels have charge over the four winds (Rev. vii. 1, 2); an angel presides over the waters (Rev. xvi. 5); an angel also presides over the altar in the Temple (*ibid.* xiv. 18).

Wherever the presence of God is manifested in an especial manner, the angelic hosts attend the Divine Majesty. Ten thousands were present at the giving of the law (Deut. xxxiii. 2; Ps. lxxviii. 17; Acts vii. 53; Gal. iii. 19), upon them God comes down as on chariots (Ps. xviii. 10, lxxviii. 17), by them his throne is borne (1 Sam. iv. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 2; Ps. xcix. 1; Isa. xxxvii. 16), in their presence God meets his people, and from among them he declares his will (Exod. xxv. 22). Hence the manifestation of God in any place premises the presence of angels, and the appearance of angels betokens the presence of God in an especial manner. Thus, when Jacob in a vision saw angels at Luz, he at once exclaimed, "It is none other but the house of God" (Gen. xxviii. 12-17). It is therefore evident that, in places where God is worshipped, and where he manifests himself as he does not unto the world, there angels are present. Hence the Sept. translates *וַיִּבֶן אֱלֹהִים מִזְבֵּיךָ*, *et ibarior ægylorum facies sei*, in the presence of the angels will I sing praise unto Thee (Ps. cxxxviii. 1), referring to the service of the Temple, where God's presence is manifested; so also the Vulg., *in conspectu angelorum psallam tibi*. Not only were God and the ministering angels present at the worship in the Temple, but, wherever two or three met together to study the Word of God, the Shechinah and the angels were in the midst of them; hence the reverential behaviour, "because of the angels." It is related in the Talmud that R. Jochanan ben Zakkai, being on a journey with R. Eliezer ben Ezech,

asked for an exposition of the vision of Ezekiel. *מיד יד רבן יוחנן בן זכאי מעל החמור ונחשפון וישב על האבן חתה הויה אמר לו רבי מפני מה ירדת מעל החמור אמר איפשר אחת ודורש במעשה מרכבה ושכינה עמנו וכלאמי השרת מלון איהנו ואני אורכב על חמור* *whereupon R. Jochanan ben Zakkai got down from the ass, and wrapped himself in the fringed garment, and sat down on a stone under an olive tree. And R. Eliezer said to him, Rabbi, wherefore didst thou go down from the ass? And he replied, whilst thou explainest the vision of the chariot, the Shechinah is in the midst of us, and the angels accompany us, and shall I ride upon an ass?* (Chagiga, 14, b.) Hence, also, the much disputed injunction in 1 Cor. xi. 10. The Apostle having shewn in 7-9 the relation of the woman to the man, she — being subordinate to the man, having been created for him, and her *ἑξᾶ* being derived from the man — is to have the mark of being under power, *i. e.*, a covering upon her face, "because of the angels," who, as we have seen, are present at Divine worship, and who would be offended at the woman that haughtily discards the badge of being under the power of man. See also on the presence-angel, 1 Tim. v. 21.

It is therefore obvious that when Coheleth enjoins reverential and ingenuous conduct in the Temple, in the presence of (מִלְּפָנֶיךָ) the angel, he means a celestial being, which is rightly maintained by the ancients. Their difference of opinion as to the particular angel here intended, arose from the fact that the angels present in the Temple occupy different offices, and as our text assigns no special office to the angel in question, every interpreter felt at liberty to choose from the different angelic officials any one he liked. Thus, because an angel, being the ambassador of God, is often put for God, the Sept., the Syriac, and Rashbam translate *לְפָנֶיךָ הַמִּלְאָךְ*, in the presence of God; St. Jerome's teacher took it to be the guardian angel of the worshipper, noting down and carrying the uttered

words unto God (comp. St. Jerome, *in loco*; Tobit xii. 12); so also Ibn Ezra, Grotius, Le Clerc, &c. The Chaldee understands by it the evil angel, who is in the heart of every one, and who shall arraign us before the bar at the great day of judgment; Bishop Reynolds, again, thinks that it has "some allusion to the history of Balaam, who, when the angel stood in the way against him, made such an excuse as this: It was an error, I knew not that thou stood against me, if it displeases thee I will go back" (Numb. xxii. 34); whilst others think it means Christ, the Angel of the Covenant, who is in the midst of the people. It seems, however, more probable that מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, like many other nouns, is used collectively for the angels who attend the Divine Majesty (so Mede and Patrick); or, which is still more literal and in accordance with the scope of the passage, that the angel presiding over the altar is here intended. The opinion of Rashi, that מִלְּפָנֶיךָ is the priest or messenger who comes for the thing vowed (שְׂרִיף הוּא לְחִיבֵיךָ דְּרָקָה) of Desvoeux, Mendelssohn, Gesen., Knobel, Holden, Hitzig, Noyes, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c., is contrary to the general usage of the word. The appeal to the solitary passage in Malachi ii. 7 is nugatory, for there it is the predicate of כֹּהֵן, priest. Besides, if a human messenger or priest were meant, we should undoubtedly have had *אֵל-הַמִּלְאָךְ אֶל-הַמִּלְאָךְ*, do not say to the messenger, and not לְפָנֶיךָ, before, in the presence of (comp. Deut. xxvi. 3, 5, where God and the priest are severally addressed, the former by אֶתְּךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, and the latter by לְפָנֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ). As to the etymology and form of מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, it is from לָפַץ, to send, to depute, to do anything, kindred with לָפַץ, לָפַץ, and לָפַץ, having its primitive root in the biliteral פָּ, to move, to be in motion, and is an abstract noun, signifying function, mission, deputation, then deputy, messenger, angel. לָפַץ, why, is the intensive interroga-

6 talk, and destroy the work of thine hands? For it is through the multitude of idle thoughts, and vanities, and much 7 talking; but fear thou the Lord. If thou seest oppression of the poor, and perverting of justice and equity in the land,

tive used for dissuading or rebuking. For קל, *prattling*, see verse 2. The destruction of property (הַחֲרָבָה) is mentioned, not because it is in keeping with the threats of the Old Testament, which primarily refer to chastisements in the present world (Stuart), but, because the transgressor thinks that, by indulging in the abjured pleasures, he will be cheered and strengthened to prosecute his work successfully, whereas God, by destroying the transgressors' handiwork, defeats the very object in view.

6. *For it is through the multitude, &c.* In concluding this paragraph about Divine worship, Coheleth gives, in a general summary, the source of all the mischief connected therewith, against which he has cautioned. The indulgence in the things abjured, the plea that the vow has been made inadvertently, as well as the wrath of God, and the punishment consequent thereupon; all this arises from being thoughtless and incautious in the presence of God. וְ, *for*, assigns a reason for what is mentioned in the foregoing admonition, the substantive verb הָיָא, as is frequently the case, is omitted after it. הָיָא רַב הַלְמוֹחַ הַרְבֵּלִים refers to the confused and vain thoughts, while הַרְבֵּלִים refers to the many and unmeaning words of the worshipper. The particle וְ, in the second clause, obtains an *adversative* force by virtue of the negative אֵלֶּיךָ אֶחָד in the preceding verse, with which it is connected, i. e., "do not suffer thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin . . . but fear God, for he punishes sin" (comp. Gen. xlv. 8; 1 Kings xxi. 15; Gesen. § 155, 1, e; Ewald, § 354, a). This simple construction of the text is supported by the Sept., the Syriac, Rashbam, and Herzfeld. The artificial rendering of the Vulg., *ubi*

MULTA SUNT SOMNIA, FLURIMÆ SUNT VANITATES, ET SERMONES INNUMERI, *where there are many dreams, there are many vanities and innumerable words*, which is followed by Luther (wo viele Träume sind, da ist Eitelkeit und viele Worte), Ewald, Heiligstedt, Hengstenberg, &c., taking הַרְבֵּלִים as the predicate of הַלְמוֹחַ; of Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible, who try to connect it with the preceding verse by adding words ("and why? whereas there are many dreams and many words, there are also divers vanities"), the Geneva Bible, and the Authorised Version, making הַרְבֵּלִים the predicate of הַלְמוֹחַ; of Reynolds, Holden, Knobel, De Wette, Noyes, Stuart, Elster, Vaibinger, &c., "for in a multitude of dreams there are vanities, and so in many words;" of Desvieux, "for it is in the multitude of dreams that both vanities and words are multiplied;" Mendelssohn and Friedlander, *Wey allen beinen Träumereyen, Eitelkeiten und Worten verleihe die Ehrfurcht gegen Gott nicht*; Hodgson, "since as in the multitude of dreams, so in the multitude of words, there are vanities;" and of Preston, "for in the multitude of dreamy and vain matters words also may be multiplied," deviate from the natural signification of the copula and the simple order of the words.

7. *If thou seest oppression, &c.* Closely connected with the service due to the Supreme Being, is the confidence we ought to repose in his protection and moral government. When we see those who are deputed to maintain and defend justice wresting from the people that which belongs to them, we are not to despair, for the power of injustice is limited; the lawless tyrant is not absolute; there is another magistrate above him, who will check his violence and

be not alarmed at the matter; for there is a superior

unjust conduct, and there are still higher magistrates to watch even over this superior one, to call him to account for duties neglected. For מַלְכוּת, *kingdom*, see ii. 8. מַלְכוּת, *to be astonished, to be struck with fear* (comp. Ps. xlviii. 6; Jer. iv. 9); the common rendering of it by "do not marvel," is incongruous, inasmuch as the assurance here given, that the power of oppressors is limited, and their unjust acts will not escape unpunished, can only be a reason for sufferers not to be frightened or to despair, but does by no means suffice to remove the cause for marveling at seeing justice perverted by the very men who are appointed to uphold it. For מַלְכוּת, which is rightly rendered by the Septuagint, *ἡγεμονία*, Vulg., *negotium*, Luther, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version in the text, and modern commentators, *matter or thing*, see iii. 1. The explanation of the Chaldee (מַלְכוּתָא דִּי עַל כָּל מְלִין, *do not wonder how the will of God can tolerate it*; Rashi, אל תתמה על חסרו של מקום כשיבא עליהם רעה, *do not wonder at the determination of God when he punishes them*; and Ibn Ezra, שתאמר מה חסר יש למקום שלא ישיע, *do not wonder at the purpose of God in not avenging it*, which is followed by the Authorised Version in the margin, Reynolds, Desvieux, and Mendelssohn, taking מַלְכוּת for *will, purpose, dispensation*, and referring it to God, requires a harsher and more intolerable ellipsis than the one repudiated in verse 3.

For there is a superior, &c. This clause has been variously interpreted. The Chaldee renders it *על ארץ עמי קרוא נסיר עובדי בני אֱלֹהִים בְּן שֵׁן לְבִישָׁתָא וְכֹן עֲמִי מְשַׁלְחִין וְנִרְבִּין וְנִחְיִין וְנִחְסִין לְמִדָּה בְּרִשְׁתָּא וְלִמְחִיָּתָא חֲסִכִּין רִנְיִין וְנִרְבִּין לְמִדָּה*, *for the Mighty God (בְּנֵה) from on high (מִלְּעֵלָּה) watches the deeds of the sons of men, whether good or evil, and from his presence are sent forth proud and strong men to rule over the wicked, and are appointed masters over them (וְנִרְבִּין מְלִין)*, taking the

first בְּנֵה for *the High One*, the second בְּנֵה for his *high habitation*, and the plural מְלִין for *high rulers*, whom God appoints upon earth to restrain the deeds of the wicked; so also Rashi. The assertion of Knobel, that the Chaldee refers מְלִין to *God*, is therefore incorrect. Ibn Ezra explains it to mean angels, who, rising one above the other in rank, are all watching the evil conduct of the wicked. For his words, and Dr. Gill's misrepresentation of them, see Introduction, p. 175. Bishop Reynolds takes בְּנֵה שֵׁן after the Chaldee, *the High One from above is looking down*; and the plural מְלִין, he refers to *the angels*, after Ibn Ezra; Bishop Patrick explains it "the king from on high (i. e., his throne, or seat of judgment) observes and will punish it; and if he does not do it, God and his angels will punish both the oppressors and the king;" taking the first בְּנֵה to denote *the king*, the second בְּנֵה his *high throne*, and the plural מְלִין to signify *God and his angels*. Dr. Gill interprets בְּנֵה מִלְּעֵלָּה according to the Chaldee, and מְלִין he takes to denote *the three Divine persons*; Holden, again, paraphrases the Auth. Ver., "for [he that is] higher than the highest angel in heaven and most powerful potentate in the world regardeth; so that nothing happens without his permission; and [there be] higher than they, i. e., there are the High Ones of the Holy Trinity, above the princes of the earth and the hierarchy of heaven;" whilst Knobel, Elster, and Vaibinger maintain that the first בְּנֵה denotes *the king*, the second בְּנֵה *the unjust magistrate*, and the plural מְלִין means *God*. But, apart from the objections which might be urged against each of these interpretations separately, we submit—1. That they are all alike guilty of assigning to the same expression, and in the same verse, *three different meanings*, which is a most unjustifiable mode of proceeding; and, 2. The following verse manifestly refers

never satisfied with money, nor he who loveth riches with

AVARUS EGRET, *the covetous is always in want*. For parallel passages, see Juvenal—

Interea pleno quum turget sacculus ore
Crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia
crevit;
Et minus hanc optat qui non habet.

"Besides, while thus the streams of affluence
roll,
They nurse the eternal droop of the soul,
For thirst of wealth still grows with wealth
increased,
And they desire it less, who have it least."
SAT. xiv. 138-140.

and also Od. iii. xvi. 28; and Ovid Fast. i. 211. כסף prop. *silver*, like ἀργύριον in Greek (Matt. xxv. 18. 27; Mark xiv. 11), and *argent* in French, is used metonymically for *money* in general (Gen. xxiii. 13, xliii. 15. 21; Exod. xxii. 6; Deut. xxiii. 20), which in ancient times was not coined, but consisted in bars or ingots of silver, the value of which was ascertained by weight (compare Gen. xxiii. 16; Exod. xxii. 17; 2 Sam. xviii. 12; Strabo, iii. 155), and which does still take place in many parts of China and Abyssinia (comp. Biner, Real Wörterbuch, s. v. Geld; Kitto Cyclop. Bib. Lit. under *Money*). Rashi's explanation of כסף כח לא hy cannot eat money, cannot feed upon it (לא יאכל), which is followed by Broughton, Mendelssohn, &c., is incompatible with the reason assigned in the following verse for the remark here made, inasmuch as it is there stated that the increase of wealth brings with it an increase of expenditure, and that this constant coming and going cannot satisfy him who loves to board up his money. כח is the same as the simple אכל in the previous clause, כח, as frequently, being used for the indefinite pronoun, *whoso* (vide supra, i. 9), and is rightly rendered so by the Vulgate (*qui*), the Chaldee (ܩܝ), the Syriac, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, and most modern commentators. The Sept.'s translation of it by τίς, interroga-

tively, which is followed by Rambach, Desvoeux, Schmidt, Spohn, &c., is against its use in such connections. כח, from חָח, *to hum, to sound, to make a noise*, is properly a *noise*, especially of a multitude (1 Sam. iv. 14, xiv. 19; Job xxxix. 7), hence a *noisy multitude*, a *great multitude*, either of *people* or *things*, a *mass*, *riches* (Ps. xxxvii. 16; Isa. lx. 5; Jerem. iii. 23; 1 Chron. xxix. 16). The distinction which Ibn Ezra makes between כח and חָח, that the former denotes riches, consisting in a *multitude of garments and merchandise* (ממון בגדים ומיני סחורה), or, according to others whom he quotes, in the *multitude of slaves and servants* (המון עבדים ושפחות ושכמים רבים), whilst the latter denotes wealth as consisting in *metal*, is too artificial. Hengstenberg's assertion, that כח never signifies directly riches, but always noise, or that which is scraped together with noise, tumult, cunning, and force, is contradicted by passages cited above. The construction of אכל with the preposition א, has no parallel in the Old Testament. אכל denotes the *produce of the earth* (Josh. v. 12; Isa. xxx. 23), or of an investment, hence *profit, gain, revenue* (Prov. x. 16, xv. 6; Isa. xxiii. 3), and is the *accusative* after אכל, which is to be supplied mentally from the preceding clause, i.e., לא יאכל כסף, &c. This interpretation seems to be the most simple and consonant with the scope of the passage, and is adopted by the Auth. Version, Hodgson, Herzfeld, Ewald, Helligstedt, Philippson, Stuart, Elster, Vaibinger, &c. The clause, however, is variously rendered; the Sept. has, καὶ τίς ἡγάπησεν ἐν πληθει αὐτοῦ γινώσκοντα; *who has loved, in its fullness, gain?* i.e., *who has fully loved gain?* taking אכל as a noun of quality, the א before it as forming a periphrasis for an adjective or adverb (vide supra, ii. 21), and exchanging the negative לא for the pron. ה. The Chaldee (ܩܝ ܕܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܡܡܢ ܕܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܡܡܢ), the Vulg. (*qui amat divitias, fructum*

10 what they yield; this, too, is vanity. For when riches increase, those that consume them increase; what advantage, therefore, hath the owner thereof, except the looking thereon
11 with his eyes? Sweet is the sleep of the husbandman,

non capiet ex eis), and Rashbam, who are followed by Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, Knobel, De Wette, Noyes, Heugstenberg, &c., supply לו after אכל, i.e., *whoso loves riches, there is no profit to him, or has no profit from them*; Rashi and Ibn Ezra render it, and *whoso loves riches, not fruit, shall not be satisfied* (אכל לא יאכל פירות), supplying אכל after the negative particle לא, and making the whole clause dependent upon אכל in the preceding clause. Desvoeux has, *who loveth numerous company? no income shall be sufficient for him*, Hitzig, und wer liebt eine Fülle die nichts einbringt, supplying אכל before לו.

10. *For when riches increase, &c.* One source of dissatisfaction to the money-lover arises from the fact that when his wealth increases his outlay also increases—children, relations, friends, servants, all flock around him to take part in its consumption; where the carcass is, there the eagles gather together. Pheraulas, who was born poor, and afterwards acquired great wealth, though the very reverse of the mean character here described, replied to the young Scian, who admired his riches and splendour, and thought that this noble-minded Persian must now be as happy as he was wealthy, "Do you think, Scian, that I live with the more pleasure the more I possess? Do you not know, that I neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, with a particle more pleasure now than when I was poor? But, by having this abundance, I gain merely this, that I have to guard more, to distribute more to others, and to have the trouble of taking care of more; for a great many domestics now demand of me their food, their drink, and their clothes;

some are in want of physicians; one comes and brings me sheep that have been torn by wolves, or oxen that have been killed by falling over a precipice, or tells me of a distemper that has fallen on the cattle; so that I seem to myself, in possessing abundance, to have more afflictions than I had before in possessing but little.

. . . If to possess riches were as pleasant as to obtain them, the rich would very much exceed the poor in happiness. But it is obligatory on him that possesses abundance to expend abundance, both on the gods, on his friends, and on strangers. Whoever, therefore, is greatly pleased with the possession of riches, will, be assured, feel much annoyed at the expenditure of them." Xenophon, Cyropæd. viii. 3. 35-44. Bohn's Classical Lib. To give in the translation the connection of the original, we must supply the causative particle for before אכל, as this verse assigns a reason for the assertion made in the preceding one. טוב, *good*, i.e., *goods, wealth* (comp. אכל טוב, *he filled their houses with wealth*, Job xxii. 18; 1 Kings x. 7). For אכל, see ii. 21. אכל, *the owner thereof*, is *plural of power* (compare verse 12, vii. 12, viii. 8; Exod. xxi. 29; Isa. i. 3; Gesen. § 108, 2, b; Ewald, § 178), with the meaning of the singular, hence the *sing.* in אכל, which refers to it. The Masoretic reading, אכל, instead of אכל, is immaterial, as this may simply be another form of the same noun, like אכל and אכל. The words אכל, *seeing it with his eyes*, refer to his seeing the increased number of devourers; the Vulg., CERNIT DIVITIAS OCULIS SUIS, *he sees the riches with his eyes*, is less appropriate.

11. *Sweet is the sleep, &c.* The troubles which the light of the day

whether he eat little or much; whilst abundance doth not

discloses to the sight of the money-lover (רָמֵהוּ עֵינָיו) do not close with the day, since night affords him no relief. Sleep, which gives the weary ploughman repose, whether he lives lavishly or frugally, is scared from the chamber of abundance by cares and fears. The refreshing sleep enjoyed by those who lead a rural life has often been celebrated by poets, both of ancient and modern times. Thus Horace—

Somnus agrestium
Lenis virorum non humiles domos
Fastidit umbrosamque ripam,
Non Zephyris agitata Tempe.

"Sleep, gentle Sleep, with no disdain,
Is looking on the roof
Low nestling of the rural swain,
Or bank embower'd in shades,
Not Tempe's breeze-fann'd glades."
OD. iii. 1. 21-24.

לֵבִי is well explained by Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, and most modern commentators, by לֵבִי מְרִיבָה, *one who tills the ground, husbandman* (comp. Gen. iv. 2; Prov. xii. 11), rural life with the ancients being the type of natural happiness and tranquillity. The Septuagint's rendering of it by δούλος, *slave*, as if the original were עֶבֶד, which some moderns have followed, is both incorrect and inapposite. The phrase וְאִם יִרְמֶהוּ יָמֵי לֵבִי, *whether he eat little or much*, as Rashi rightly remarks (כי כִּכְרֵהוּ בֶכֶן), shews his contented habits, his indifference to the fact that he lives lavishly or frugally. וְאִם—אִם, like אִם—אִם, *if—if*, without the וְ, is used disjunctively for *whether—or*, like τίς—τίς, τίς—τίς in Greek (comp. 1 Cor. xii. 26; 2 Cor. i. 6; *infra*, xi. 3, xii. 14; Gen. xxxi. 52; Josh. xxiv. 15; Ewald, § 361). For the adverbial use of וְאִם, see i. 16.

Whilst abundance, &c. The disturbed rest of the avaricious and careworn money-lover has also been set forth by the classical writers as a melancholy contrast to the sweet repose of the humble labourer—

An vigilare metu exanimem, noctesque
diesque
Formidare malos fures, incendia, servos,

Ne te compilent fugientes; hoc juvat? horum
Semper ego optarim pauperrimus esse
bonorum.

"But, with continual watching almost dead,
House-breaking thieves, and midnight-fires
to dread,
Or the suspected slave's untimely flight
With the dear self; if this be thy delight,
Be it my fate, so Heaven in bounty please,
Still to be poor of blessings such as these."
HORACE. SAT. I. 1. 76-79.

שָׂבִיעַ, *satiety*, like שָׂבִיעַ (Deut. xxxiii. 23), denotes *abundance of things, riches* (comp. Gen. xli. 29; Prov. iii. 10); so Rashi (שִׁבְעָה נִכְסִים), Rashbam, Ibn Ezra (וְרֵב מִכֶּסֶף), Knobel, Heiligstedt, &c. St. Jerome, however, takes it to mean *abundance of food* (*incocto cibo in stomachi angustia astante*), the repletion of the stomach with various delicacies, which, being more than he can digest, keeps the rich man awake; this explanation is also suggested by Ibn Ezra (אִם יִרְמֶהוּ יָמֵי לֵבִי), and is adopted by Reynolds, Mendelssohn, Desvoeux, Hodgson, Herzfeld, Hitzig, Elster, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c., but is incompatible with the scope of the passage. The character here depicted is a greedy money-lover, who is tormented by every item of increased expenditure, and it is therefore not very likely that *such an one* will live *so abundantly* as to be kept from sleeping by "overloading his stomach." Besides, this interpretation mars the contrast here drawn, which is not between faring sumptuously and living meanly, but between the quiet repose of the labourer and the disturbed, the anxious nights of the money hunter. The simple order of the words in this clause would have been וְהַשְׂבִּיעַ אֵינֶנּוּ מִיָּד לְעֵשֶׂר לֵשׁוֹן, but to give prominence to the antithesis, וְהַשְׂבִּיעַ is placed at the beginning of the sentence (comp. Gesen. § 145, 1; Ewald, § 309, a). The לְעֵשֶׂר is not the *dative of appurtenance*, standing for וְהַשְׂבִּיעַ, *the abundance of the rich* (the Sept., Vulg., Rashi, Rashbam, Luther, Coverdale, De Wette, Gesenius (Lex. s. v., ל, 4, c), Ewald (§ 202, a), Hitzig, Heiligstedt,

12 suffer the rich to sleep. There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun—riches hath been hoarded up by the
13 rich for the owner thereof to his hurt. For the riches perish in some unfortunate business, and he begetteth a

Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c.), but is the *dative of person*, belonging to the verb הָיָה, with which it is often construed (comp. Exod. xxxii. 10; 2 Sam. xvi. 11; 1 Chron. xvi. 21). The repetition of the *dative* (לְ) has been occasioned by the interposition of אֵינֶנּוּ, which, as Herzfeld rightly remarks, makes לְעֵשֶׂר a *nominative absolute*. The genius of the English language does not admit of imitating the order in the Hebrew; in German the construction can be retained: aber der Ueberfluß den Reichen—er laßt ihn nicht schlafen.

12. *There is a sore evil, &c.* The corroding desire for more wealth (ver. 9), the mortification by day in seeing the increased drains upon it (10), and the anxious and sleepless nights (11) which this wicked money-lover has to endure, are aggravated by the fact that his iniquity is visited upon "his children and children's children" (Exod. xxxiv. 7), inasmuch as he hoards up riches for his son, for the next owner of it (לְבָנָיו), to his son's harm (לְחָיָהוּ). The fem. part. הֹאֲמֵרָה, here and in verse 15, is used adjectively, the relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר as frequently being implied after הֹאֲמֵרָה (comp. *infra*, vi. 1), where the full construction is to be found. לְעֵשֶׂר שְׂמֹרָה, *riches kept for*, the subject of the verb הָיָה as frequently must be supplied from circumstance (*vide supra*, iv. 12, 14), i. e., *riches kept by the rich man for*, &c. (comp. לְעֵשֶׂר שְׂמֹרָה, *for until this time hath it been kept f.r. thee*, 1 Sam. ix. 24, the only other passage where לְעֵשֶׂר occurs, and where, as here, the subject (שְׂמֹרָה) is to be supplied from the connection. הָיָה, *its owner*, i. e., *the one who now owns it, the heir*, to whom the suffix הִיא refers. The rendering of לְעֵשֶׂר שְׂמֹרָה, *riches kept by its owner* (Knobel, Ewald, De

Wette, Herzfeld, Noyes, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Elster, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c.) is ungrammatical, and is contradicted by the passage already cited, where this phrase occurs. The rare instances of a *passive* participle being followed by לְ, which are adduced in justification of this rendering, prove nothing, for even if their correctness be admitted, it is most unjustifiable to create more irregularities because similar ones are to be found, and especially as the regular construction yields good sense. Besides, this rendering, as well as the interpretation which commentators generally give of this passage, are contrary to the scope of the passage, inasmuch as they refer לְעֵשֶׂר, *the rich man* who hoards up riches to his own injury, whereas the passage speaks of two distinct persons, one hoarding up the riches, and the other possessing them, and the context describes the misery of his progeny. The plur. הָיָה, as in verse 10, is used for the singular, hence לְחָיָהוּ, *to his harm*, with sing. suffix; the Sept., Vulg., Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, and almost all modern versions, render it in the singular, whilst the Authorised Version, following the Geneva Bible, wrongly translates it "for the owners thereof to their hurt."

13. *For the riches perish, &c.* Coheleth now shews how those riches have been hoarded up by the money-lover, to the hurt of the owner thereof, or heir. Having come into the possession of wealth, as well as of an unquenchable thirst for more, which is its concomitant, he is led to speculate, and by some important undertaking loses all. This punishment is felt all the more bitterly, because he begets a son in these impoverished

18 given him; for this is his portion; and I have also seen, that a man to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and if he hath enabled him to eat thereof, and to take his portion, 19 and to rejoice in his labour, this is a gift of God. He should remember that the days of his life are not many, that God causeth him to work for the enjoyment of his heart.

18. *And I have also seen, &c.* This verse forms an integral part of the preceding one, intensifying its statement. Not only is there nothing left for man but present enjoyment, but even for this he is dependent upon God. *וְגַם*, also, is dependent upon *וְרָאִיתִי* in the preceding verse, and the particle *וְ* is to be supplied after it. *וְהַיּוֹמִים* is the apodosis to the protasis, which begins with *וְהַיּוֹמִים*. The two synonymous terms *עֲשֵׂר וְנָכְסִים*, *riches and wealth*, are used to describe great abundance, and, being inanimate things, are followed by *כִּמְנוּ*, the *neuter* in the singular.

19. *He should remember, &c.* To urge us on to the enjoyment of the present, the only thing left for man, as stated in verse 17, Coheleth submits that we ought always to remember two things; first, the shortness of our life, and hence the necessity of enjoying it whilst it lasts. The prominence which the sacred writer has given to the first part of this hemistich (*לֹא הָרְבָּה*) gave rise to the frequently occurring attraction; so that *לֹא הָרְבָּה יוֹמֵי חַיָּיִךְ* stands for *לֹא הָרְבָּה יוֹמֵי חַיָּיִךְ* (comp. ii. 24, iii. 21, and especially xi. 8, where this attraction takes place in a similar phrase). So also Rashi, Ibn Ezra (for Gill's misrepresentation of these Rabbins, see p. 176), Mendelssohn, Herzfeld, and Philippson. The Septuagint, not perceiving this attraction, renders this clause, *ὅτι οὐ πολλὰ μνησθήσεται τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῦ*, for he shall not much remember the days of his life, which is followed by the Vulgate (*non enim satis recordabitur dierum vite sue*), Luther (*denn er drückt nicht viel an das elende Leben*).

who, by way of explanation, has *miserable life* instead of *the days of his life*, Coverdale, and the Bishops' Bible ("for he thinketh not much how long he shall live"), the Geneva Bible ("surely he will not much remember the days of his life"), the Auth. Version in the text, Desvoeux, Hodgson, Knobel, Gesenius, (Lex. under *יָמָיו*), Ewald, De Wette, Stuart, Elster, &c., and which is explained "in the enjoyment of the special gifts of God, his reflections on the sombre part, or on the shortness of his days, will cease to be painful and distressing to him!" The marginal reading of the Authorised Version, "though he give not much, yet he remembereth the days of his life," is a literary curiosity.

That God causeth, &c. The second thing we are to remember is, that the design of God, in assigning to us the various pursuits of life, is present enjoyment. *וְ*, that, is the conjunction following the verb of remembering, as in the preceding clause. The rendering of it by *because, for, forasmuch* (the Septuagint, Vulgate, Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, &c.), or *when* (Stuart, &c.), is owing to their misunderstanding of the preceding part of the verse. *כִּמְנוּ* is the Hiphil participle of *עָנָה*, which is so frequently used in this book for *to occupy, to work*; the literal meaning of the Hiphil, therefore, is *to cause to work*; the pronoun *אֵלָיו*, him, as frequently, is omitted. *וְיִשְׂמְחוּ לִבּוֹ*, in or for the enjoyment of his heart, i. e., he assigns to him work wherein is enjoyment of heart, or makes him work for. or that he might have,

enjoyment. So some interpreters mentioned in the Michlal Jophi יש מפרשים אותו לשון עסק מענין לענות בו הוא פועל יוצא ופירושו כי האלקים נותן לו עסק (וענין במה שיסמך לו), the Septuagint (*ὁ θεὸς παρασχεῖ τὸν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ*, *God occupies him in the joy of his heart*), and the more paraphrastic Vulgate (*Deus occupet delictis cor eius*, *God occupies his heart with delights*), which gave rise to Luther's version (*Gott erfreuet sein Herz*), and to the rendering of Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible ("God filleth his heart with gladness," taking *occupet* in the sense of *filling*), De Wette, Gesenius, Vaihinger, &c.; others, however, translate it, *God leaves him to sing in the joy of heart* (הק' נתן לו ממן זה למען ירי' משורר ושכח)

בלבו ולהיות שמח בחלקו בחיו. מענה לשון מסעיל והוא לשון שמחה וזמרה כמו ותען להם מרים (Rashbam, Köster, &c.), or *God answers him with the joy of his heart*, i. e., bestows upon him joy, as it were, in answer to his desire (י' אומרים והוא מלשון ענה וענינו יענה השואל והמבקש כפי שאלו, some interpreters mentioned by Ibn Ezra, the Geneva Bible, the Auth. Ver., Geier, Döderlein, Rosenmüller, Noyes, Elster, Hengstenberg, &c.), or, *God helps thee in the enjoyment of heart* (מענה ענינו ממציא כמו מענה את השמים הם יענו את הארץ והענין שהמקום מסייע לו בשמחתו כיון כי הוא נתן לו והשלימו לאכל מכונו Ibn Ezra, Mendelssohn, Preston, Hitzig, &c.) But these renderings do not comport with the *Hiphil*, nor do they affect the argument.

SECTION III.

CHAPTER VI. 1—VIII. 15.

Coheleth now shews that wealth is utterly unable to secure real happiness (vi. 1–9), since the rich man can neither overrule the order of Providence (10), nor know what will conduce to his well-being (11, 12). And lastly, *prudence*, or what is generally called *common sense*, is examined, and shewn to be as unsatisfactory as all the preceding experiments. Coheleth thought that to live so as to leave a good name (vi. 1–4); to listen to merited rebuke (5–9); not to indulge in a repining spirit, but to submit to God's Providence (10–14); to be temperate in religious matters (15–20); not to pry into everybody's opinions (21, 22), lessons of prudence, or common sense, higher wisdom, being unattainable (23, 24); to submit to the powers that be, even under oppression, believing that the mightiest tyrant will ultimately be punished (viii. 1–9), and that, though retribution is sometimes withheld (10), which indeed is the cause of increased wickedness (11), yet that God will eventually administer rewards and punishments (12, 13); that this would satisfy him during the few years of his life. But as this did not account for the melancholy fact that the fortunes of the righteous and the wicked are often reversed all their lifetime, this common-sense view of life too often proved vain (14), and Coheleth therefore recurs to his repeated conclusion, that there is nothing left for man but to enjoy the things of this life (15).

vi. 1 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it
2 weigheth heavily upon man. Here is a man to whom God
hath given riches, and wealth, and abundance, so that his
soul lacketh nothing of all that it desireth, and God hath
not given him the power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth

1. *There is an evil, &c.* Coheleth now shews that wealth, too, is utterly unable to secure real happiness. As *ῥῆ*, like *ῥῆ* in Greek, is used both for the amount of numbers, *many, much*, and tropically for degree, *much, great*, hence interpreters are divided as to the rendering of *רָעָה הָיָה עֵל הָאָדָם*. Thus the Vulgate (*frequens apud homines*), Rashi (רַחֲמָה בְּרַחֲמֵי הוֹמִינִים), Luther (*es ist gemeln bei den Menschen*), Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, Hodgson, De Wette, Noyes, Preston, &c., translate it, *it is common, general, or much among people*, whilst Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Knobel, Herzfeld, Ewald, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Philippson, Stuart, Elster, Hengstenberg, &c., render it, *it weighs heavily upon man*. But as the preposition *עַל*, upon, which expresses the pressure or weight of a grievance (*vide supra*, ii. 17), and especially as the phrase *וְרָעָה הָיָה עֵל הָאָדָם* in viii. 6, denoting undoubtedly *the evil of man is great, or weighs heavily upon him* (compare also Isa. xxiv. 20), are against the first rendering, we must decide for the second.

2. *Here is a man, &c.* To illustrate the inability of riches to yield satisfaction, Coheleth refers to a type of man—instances of which we may daily see in abundance among the money-men of our day—whose schemes of emolument have largely prospered, and who has succeeded in procuring all the luxuries that the heart can desire and that wealth can command, yet God has not given him the capacity of enjoying these overflowing resources of earthly good. *גָּבֹר* is not *glory, honour* (Sept. *ἡγάλα*, Vulgate, Syriac,

Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, Desvieux, Knobel, Gesenius (Lex. s. v.), Ewald, De Wette, Heiligstedt, Noyes, Elster, Vaibinger, Hengstenberg, &c.), which is incompatible with the verb *לֹאֵל*, inasmuch as it would be preposterous to say, *he cannot eat his honour, but abundance* (Rashbam, Hodgson, Herzfeld, Philippson, Stuart, Fürst, &c.), in which sense it is frequently coupled with *עָשָׂר* (compare *עָשָׂר אִשׁ בִּיָּרֵחָה*, *נָבֹר בִּיחֹה*, when a man becomes rich, when the abundance of his house increases, Ps. xlix. 17; Prov. iii. 16, viii. 18; Isa. x. 3, lxvi. 12). Whether we take *אִשׁ* to stand for *אִשׁ* (compare Gen. xxx. 33, xxxix. 9), construe *עָשָׂר* with the dative, as in Deut. xv. 8, and translate *אִשׁ לֹאֵל לְעָשָׂר*, *אִשׁ לֹאֵל לְעָשָׂר*, *nichts fehlt seiner Seele von allem was ihn gelüftet, nothing lacketh to his soul of all that he desires* (the Vulg., Hodgson, Noyes, &c.), or retain the usual rendering, *he denies nothing to his soul of all* (the Sept., the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, &c.), the preposition *כִּן* does not stand for the object of *עָשָׂר*, but is *partitive* (*vide supra*, iv. 8). As *אִשׁ* is of a common gender, the verb *עָשָׂר* is better referred to it. For *אִשׁ*, the neuter pronoun singular, referring to several nouns, see v. 18.

But a stranger, &c. The poignancy of the grief is enhanced by the fact that he who inherits his property, and possesses the power of enjoying it, is not even a son, but a total stranger. To depart this life without issue, and to leave one's possessions to strangers, was one of the greatest calamities that could befall an Eastern. When God appeared to

3 it; this is vanity, and a sore evil. Though one beget a hundred children, and live many years, yea, numerous as may be the days of his years, yet, if his soul is not satisfied

Abraham (Gen. xv. 1–5), and told him that he was his shield, and promised to reward him greatly, the aged patriarch at once exclaimed, *כִּי־אֶפְרָחִי*, “what canst thou give when I am going off childless, and when the owner of my house is to be Dammesek Eliezer?” No blessing could compensate the absence of children, and no sorrow was greater to him than to leave his acquired property to a stranger, though this stranger was his faithful servant. *אִשׁ אֲחֵרָה*, a stranger, one of another family, in contradistinction to one's own son. The explanation of it by *foreigner, enemy, plunderer* (Reynolds, Ewald, Heiligstedt, &c.), is contrary to the scope of the passage which speaks of a man who *did not lose his wealth*, but retained it through life, and could not enjoy it. Moreover, the contrast in the next verse plainly shews that a childless parent is here intended. When describing the inability of the owner of the property to enjoy, the sacred writer used the *partitive* *לֹאֵל מִכֶּסֶּד*, *eat of it*, enjoy any part of it; but, when speaking of the stranger who comes into possession of the property, he is described as *אִשׁ אֲחֵרָה*, *without the partitive*, enjoying it all.

3. *Though one beget, &c.* So great, however, is the misery of not being able to enjoy one's property, that, even if the case were the very reverse of what it was stated to be in the preceding verse; if, instead of being childless and leaving one's possessions to a stranger, one had been blessed with an unusually large number of children; and if, instead of departing this life, and bequeathing one's property at the ordinary time allotted to man, one lived an extraordinary number of years in the possession of his wealth, yet, if he had not the power of enjoying it, an abortion is far better

than he. *אִשׁ*, as often, is used *concessively*, and, as is generally the case, is followed by the imperfect (comp. *אִשׁ יִצְחָק לְשָׁמַיִם עֹלָה*, *though his height were to mount up to heaven*, Job xx. 6; Isa. i. 18; Ps. cxxxix. 8; Gesen. § 155, 2, g; Ewald, § 362, b). *אִשׁ*, a man, any one, one (comp. Gen. xiii. 16; Exod. xvi. 20; Song of Songs viii. 7). *אִשׁ* is neither here nor elsewhere used adverbially for a hundred times (Knobel, &c.), but invariably signifies a hundred; the object, as is frequently the case with numerals, is implied, and must be taken from the context. Here, of course, with the Chaldee, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, &c., we must supply *בָּנִים* (compare *אִשׁ שֶׁנָּתַן שֶׁנָּתַן*, *the barren woman hath born seven*, i. e., children, 1 Sam. ii. 5, and *vide infra*, viii. 12). Durell's construction of *אִשׁ* with *אִשׁ*, i. e., *though he beget a hundred mules*, is ungrammatical, as *אִשׁ* cannot stand after a noun singular. Besides, *בָּנִים* is used in such a case, and not *אִשׁ*. Though some have had nearly as many children (comp. 2 Chron. xi. 21; 2 Kings x. 1), yet it will hardly be questioned that *אִשׁ* is used as a round number for a great many (comp. Gen. xxvi. 12; 2 Sam. xxiv. 3; Prov. xvii. 10; 1 Cor. xiv. 19; and see *infra*, viii. 12). *רַב*, much, many, is used adverbially, and like *עָשָׂר* (*vide supra*, v. 1) is joined to substantives plural (comp. *רַבִּים רַבִּים*, *lightnings much*, i. e., a great many, in great number, Deut. xxxiii. 7; Ps. xviii. 15). The *וְרַב* is cumulative, augmenting and intensifying the concession made in the first clause, i. e., *numerous as may be, &c.* Overlooking this, many interpreters have found it difficult to explain this hemistich, without producing a truism or tautology. The unhappy rendering of the Vulg., *ET VIXERIT MULTOS ANNOS ET PLURES DIES ETATIS HABUERIT*, and *live many*

with good, and even if the grave did not wait for him, I say,

years, and have many days of years, which is followed by Luther (und hätte so langes Leben, daß er viele Jahre überlebte), Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Auth. Version ("and live many years, so that the days of his years be many"), Reynolds, Preston, &c., or, "and live many years, and the days of his years be multiplied" (the Geneva Bible, De Wette, &c.), must strike every reader, as if one could live many years *without living many days*. To avoid this awkwardness, the Chaldee explains this clause, *וְכִּי־יִשְׁכַּחֲמָהּ וְיִשְׁכַּחֲמָהּ הוּא דִּי הָיָה יוֹכֵי שְׁנוֹן, and if he had been in power and dominion all the days of his life*, taking *וְכִי* to denote a chief, leader, a great man, which is followed by Desvieux, Knobel, Vaihinger, &c. But against this is to be urged, that *וְכִי* as a substantive, in the sense of *chief*, is invariably followed by the *genitive of that over which he is the chief*. Rashi and Ibn Ezra, again, explain *וְכִי* by *plenty, abundance* (*וְכִי* וְכִי שֶׁבַח יְסִיבֵל), i. e., if he had plenty of riches, and all manner of good the days of his life. But this requires too great and too harsh an ellipsis; and, if the sacred writer had intended to convey this sense, he would undoubtedly have written *וְכִי* שֶׁבַח יְסִיבֵל. Gill's assertion, that Rashi interprets it "*sufficient*, he lives as long as is desirable," when Rashi's words are *וְכִי* וְכִי שֶׁבַח יְסִיבֵל, meaning *plenty of all sorts of good*, is another lamentable proof of his misrepresenting the Rabbins. Whilst Durell, dissatisfied with all these explanations, alters *וְכִי* into *וְכִי* (compare 1 Sam. xiv. 34), and translates it, "and his sheep (here taken for substance in general) be great all the days of his life." This requires no refutation.

And even if the grave, &c. The augmentation, rising in scale, has here reached its climax. Not only would numerous years not compensate for the inability of enjoying one's property, but even (*וְכִי*, see ver. 5) if

the grave were not to exist for such a man, if he were never to die, an untimely birth, which has had no life at all, would be preferable to him, though in the possession of perpetual life, so extraordinary and great a boon. Great difficulty has been experienced in the exposition of this clause. Already St. Jerome mentions different explanations of it—1. It means that, having been occupied for so many years in amassing wealth, and having laid up so much for many years to come, the rich man did not think of death or burial, and hence "has no burial" in his mind, does not remember that he must die, and is not prepared for it. 2. It means that his covetous heart does not allow him to provide a respectable sepulchre for his remains (so also the Chaldee, Patrick, Clark, Knobel, Stuart, &c.) 3. It means that he is assaulted and murdered for his wealth, and his body is cast away without interment (so also Rashi). 4. It means that he has no burial, because he has not lived; having done no good or worthy thing whereby to perpetuate his memory among his posterity, but having allowed his life to pass away in silence like a beast. This opinion St. Jerome himself adopts. 5. According to Rashbam, again, it means that he has lost his money, and therefore was not buried (so also Desvieux, Ewald, &c.) 6. It means that his heirs deny him an honourable interment for want of respect (Reynolds, Mendelssohn, Holden, Elster, Philippson, &c.) 7. It is a marginal gloss, put inadvertently into the text (Hitzig). Passing over the emendations of the text as unwarranted and arbitrary, we submit that these explanations, making Coheleth speak of interment, or of funeral honours, or of a monument to perpetuate his memory, are totally at variance with the argument before us. 1. The object of the sacred writer is not to contrast the ignominy of a graveless corpse with the blessedness

4 Better than he is an untimely birth; for this cometh in nothingness and goeth in darkness, and with darkness is its memory covered; it doth not even see, and doth not know

of a long and fruitful life, but to shew that nothing, *not even a long and fruitful life*, can compensate for the inability of enjoying one's possessions. He therefore puts a prosperous, fruitful, and *long life* in the balance with the want of power to enjoy overflowing riches, and finds the latter so miserably wanting, that he prefers nauseous lifelessness to such a *long life*, as the fifth verse unmistakably shews. 2. *וְכִי* invariably means a *burial-place*, a *grave*, a *sepulchre*. Jer. xxii. 19, the only instance which Gesenius adduces in his lexicon to shew that it signifies *burial*, the action of burying, sepulture, forms no exception, inasmuch as *וְכִי* is better rendered in the *sepulchre of an ass he shall be buried*. Besides, the Jews had too great a respect for their dead to deny a grave to one who happened to be a miser, or to lose his money. 3. The concessive particle *וְכִי* shews, beyond doubt, that the climax is here reached by the concessions. These facts are also against those who interpret this clause as referring to *accidental absence of funeral honours*, or of a *grave*. Now, in Scripture language, *very long life* is hyperbolically described by *not seeing death*, or the *grave* (comp. the phrases *וְכִי* וְכִי שֶׁבַח יְסִיבֵל, *not to see death*, Ps. lxxxix. 40; Heb. xi. 5), and *וְכִי* וְכִי שֶׁבַח יְסִיבֵל, *not to see the grave* (Ps. xvi. 10, xlix. 10), whilst a *speedy death* is described by the *grave waiting for one* (comp. *וְכִי* וְכִי שֶׁבַח יְסִיבֵל, *graves wait for me*, Job xvii. 1). In the face of the last-cited passage, the sense of *וְכִי* וְכִי שֶׁבַח יְסִיבֵל, the *grave is not waiting for him*, will at once be obvious. *וְכִי* וְכִי שֶׁבַח יְסִיבֵל, the *perfect*, like *novi, memini, odi*, in Latin, and *ᾔδω, μνησκω* in Greek, is used for the *present* (comp. *infra*, viii. 14, ix. 10; Gesen. § 126, 8; Ewald, § 135, b). The comparison of one in great misery with an untimely birth also occurs in Job iii. 16.

4. *For this cometh, &c.* The fate of the untimely birth is preferable, because it is a mere nothing when born; it is immediately and quietly put out of sight, and nothing is known about it. *וְכִי*, *to come*, i. e., into existence. *וְכִי*, *nothingness*, i. e., a mere nothing in size and form. *וְכִי*, *it goes*, i. e., to be buried. *וְכִי*, *in darkness*, in obscurity, as untimely births are removed and interred without its being known, whilst the funerals of grown-up and aged people are attended with much noise and great ceremonies. *וְכִי*, when used in connection with the departed, denotes *memory*—*וְכִי* (comp. Deut. ix. 14; 1 Sam. xxiv. 22; 2 Sam. xiv. 7; Ps. lxxii. 17). That it is here *memory*, and not "name," is evident from the fact that, being an untimely birth, it had no name given to it. Some indeed (the Vulg., the Chaldee, Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Version, the Authorised Version, Jermin, &c.) refer this verse to the man who has no ability to enjoy his property, and others (Rashbam, Reynolds, Patrick, Gill, Desvieux, &c.) to both the *joyless man and the untimely birth*; but the following verse, which continues this subject, as is evident from the expression *וְכִי*, leaves it beyond the shadow of a doubt that it refers to the abortion, the immediate antecedent. (So Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Mendelssohn, Scott, Clarke, Holden, Knobel, De Wette, Herzfeld, Ewald, Gesenius, Preston, Noyes, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c.) For Jermin's remarkable explanation of this verse, see p. 140.

5. *It doth not even see, &c.* And not having lived at all, the untimely birth is free from all the ills and sufferings of life with which the joyless rich man is loaded, and hence it has more rest than he. Bearing in mind what a luxury rest is with

6 the sun; it hath more rest than he. And if he live twice a thousand years and see no good, do not both go to the same

Oriental, how eagerly they desire it, and how highly they prize it; that from this circumstance the rest promised in the laud of Canaan, as well as in the heavenly Canaan, has borrowed its imagery; we shall be able to enter more fully into the preference here given to the reposing abortive. Of course the contrast is between the ever-busy, careworn, and annoyed speculator, who is *living*, and active, and the untimely birth, which is *dead*, and resting; for in death both rest alike. We should have deemed this remark superfluous had not some interpreters mistaken the comparison. בְּיָמָיו denotes *accession*, augmenting and intensifying what has already been said, setting forth more definitely and largely the idea commenced with the words בְּיָמָיו , *i. e.*, it is not only a mere nothing in its size and form, but has no life as well, being dead prior to its birth. רָאָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ , *to see the sun* (*i. q.*, רָאָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ), is an established phrase denoting *to live* (comp. *infra*, vii. 11, xi. 7; Job iii. 16; Ps. xlix. 20, lviii. 9), and has its analogy in the Greek ὁρᾶ φάος ἡμερῶν (Hom. II. 2 61), $\text{ὁ λαμπρὸς αἴθερ, ἡμέρας ἀγνὸν φάος; ὡς λεύσσειν}$ (Eurip. Hippol.), and in the Latin, *luminibus uti, diem videre* (Ovid. *Frist.* v. 4, 44), as well as in our phrase *to see the light of the day*, and is evidently chosen because of רָאָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ in the preceding verse. וְיָצֵא , as frequently, is added to רָאָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ to augment and intensify the idea (comp. 1 Sam. xii. 17, xxiii. 23, xxv. 17; 2 Sam. xxiv. 13; 1 Kings xx. 7. 22; 2 Kings v. 7). The explanation, *not felt any worldly happiness*, which Reynolds, Mendelssohn, Herzfeld, &c., give to this passage, is therefore contrary to the usage of this phrase. The complicated rendering of the Sept., $\text{καὶ οὐκ ἔγνω ἀναπαύσεις τούτῳ ὑπὲρ τοῦτον}$, and *has not known rest to this above that*, detaches וְיָצֵא from רָאָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ , and connects it with the following part of the

hemistich, against the accents and the usual connection of these two verbs. So does also the traditional paraphrase of the Chaldee, $\text{וְיָצֵא הוּא לְיָמָיו לְיָמָיו רָאָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ}$, *and he does not know between good and evil, to choose between this world and the world to come*, which is followed by the Vulg. (*NEQUE COGNOVIT DISTANTIAM BONI ET MALI, nor does he know the difference between good and evil*), Luther (*und weiß keine Ruhe weder hier noch da*), Coverdale ("and knoweth of no rest, neither here nor there"). Ibn Ezra, too, separates it from the preceding verb, and is consequently obliged to supply the word מֵאֲחֵרָה , which is followed by the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Ver., the Authorised Version, &c. וְיָצֵא , *rest*, and then *good* as resulting therefrom, as is evident from $\text{וְיָצֵא הוּא לְיָמָיו לְיָמָיו רָאָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ}$ in verse 3, for which the synonymous $\text{וְיָצֵא הוּא לְיָמָיו לְיָמָיו רָאָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ}$ is here used (comp. also iv. 6). For וְיָצֵא , standing for וְיָצֵא , see ii. 7.

6. *And if he live, &c.* But after all the concessions made in verse 3, however extraordinarily long the life of this rich man may be, it must eventually terminate, and he go to the same place as the abortion; so that his long life, joylessly spent, not only placed him below the untimely birth as long as it lasted, but is of no advantage to him in death, since he must share the same doom as the abortion. וְיָצֵא , *if* (a contraction of וְיָצֵא , *if*, and וְיָצֵא , *if*), which only occurs once more in the Old Testament (*Esth.* vii. 4) is a particle of later Hebrew, and is frequently used in the Targums, the Mishna, and the Syriac. The subject of וְיָצֵא , *he lived*, is still וְיָצֵא , *a man, one*, mentioned in verse 3, to whom the relative pronoun וְיָצֵא refers, with which the preceding verse concludes. וְיָצֵא is not *many thousand* (וְיָצֵא , Ibn Ezra), but *two thousand*, the dual וְיָצֵא , *two times*, is used adver-

7 place? All the labour of this man is for his mouth, and yet 8 the soul cannot be satisfied; for what advantage hath the

bially, like our *twice*. The phrase is a paraphrase of $\text{וְיָצֵא הוּא לְיָמָיו לְיָמָיו רָאָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ}$, hyperbolically expressing unusually long life. The interrogative וְיָצֵא is used for an emphatic assertion (comp. i. 8). For וְיָצֵא , *place*, *i. e.*, *the grave*, *sheol*, as well as וְיָצֵא , *the same*, and וְיָצֵא , *both*, see iii. 20.

7. *All the labour, &c.* This verse shews how the untimely birth has *more rest than this man*, inasmuch as it states that his life is a protracted scene of toil, turmoil, and dissatisfaction, ever labouring to satisfy his soul, which cannot be satisfied, whilst the abortion escapes all this. וְיָצֵא does not refer to *man generally*, as most commentators take it, but to the particular individual described in the preceding verses, as is evident from the context, and especially from the phrase $\text{וְיָצֵא הוּא לְיָמָיו לְיָמָיו רָאָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ}$, *i. q.*, וְיָצֵא , *for his mouth*, *i. e.*, *for his enjoyment*. וְיָצֵא , *mouth*, is used metonymically for the food and dainties put into it. Luther strangely renders this clause *einem seglichen Menschen ist Arbeit aufgelegt nach seiner Maße, to every man work is allotted, according to his measure*, taking וְיָצֵא as a particle with suffix; so also Holden, who however translates it, *all the labour of this man is with respect to or for himself, or his own account*; but this, to say the least, is an unnecessary departure from the meaning וְיָצֵא , and does not improve the sense. For וְיָצֵא , *yet*, see ii. 14. To be consistent with his mistranslation of the former clause, Luther renders this part of the verse, *aber das Herz kann nicht daran bleiben, but his heart cannot abide by it, i. e.*, *the heart cannot keep to the work allotted to man, but runs away from it after greater things*.

8. *For what advantage, &c.* To shew more strikingly that all the exertions of this rich man fail to satisfy the cravings of his soul, Coheleth ap-

peals to the fact that no efforts of any man can do this; for the wise man in this respect has no advantage over the fool, nor the poor man over the chief. וְיָצֵא assigns a *reason* for the assertion made in the last clause of the preceding verse. For the interrogative וְיָצֵא , *what advantage?* for an *emphatic denial*, see i. 8. וְיָצֵא , from the first clause, must be supplied before וְיָצֵא , *i. e.*, *what advantage has the poor man over him who knows, &c.* וְיָצֵא , *to walk before the living*, denotes *one who leads a public life*, in contradistinction to the וְיָצֵא , *him who spends his life in obscurity* (v. 16); *one who is a leader, a chief, a magnate* (compare iv. 16). For וְיָצֵא , *the living*, denoting *men*, see iv. 15. The difficulty experienced in the interpretation of this verse has been increased by the discordant and loose paraphrases of the ancient versions. Thus the Sept. renders it $\text{ὅτι τίς περισσύνει τὸ σφῶς ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀφρονα; διότι ὁ πίνος ὁδὸν περισσύνει κατὰ τὴν τῆς ζωῆς, for what advantage is there to the wise man above the fool? since the poor man knows to walk before life. The Vulg. has, *QUID HABET AMPLIUS SAPIENS A STULTO? ET QUID PAUPER, NISI UT PERGAT ILLUO, UBI EST VITA? what has the wise man more than the fool? and what the poor man but that he go thither where life is?* which has evidently arisen from the Hagadic explanation given by the Chaldee, $\text{וְיָצֵא הוּא לְיָמָיו לְיָמָיו רָאָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ}$, *for what advantage has the wise man in this world over the fool, because of the wicked generation by which he is not accepted? and what is this poor man to do but to study the law of the Lord, that he may know how he will have to walk before the righteous in paradise?*$

The Syriac translates it $\text{وَيَصْنَعُ الْبَارِئُ}$

wise man over the fool? what the poor man over him who

פְּלֹאֵלִים לְחִיפִים מִכִּי בְּחַיִּים
לְחִיפִים בְּחַיִּים מִכִּי בְּחַיִּים

לְחִיפִים, for there is an advantage to the wise man over the fool, why? for the poor man knows to go to life. So also the Vatican copy of the Sept., *ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ πτωχοῦ ἔστι ζωὴ ἀποβίου*. The Rabbins, though adhering more to the text, also differ greatly in their interpretation of this verse. According to Rashi, it means "for what has this wise man more than the fool, and what has the poor man less than the rich man, since he, too, knows how to walk before the living?" וְחָכְרִי שֶׁכֵּן הוּא מִהַיְוֵה יוֹתֵר לוֹ בְּחִכְכוֹ מִשָּׂאֵם הַיָּד נִסְל וְכִי לֹא לֵעֲנִי חֲכוּרִים שֶׁאֵין לוֹ קוֹרָה וְרוּחַ נִסְל, and since it is so (i.e., the appetite is insatiable), what more has he through his wisdom than if he were a fool? and what has the poor man less than the rich man who has no rest of mind, since he, too, knows how to proceed in the land by the living? which is followed by Broughton, who renders the verse, "then what hath the wise man more than the fool? and what less hath the poor man of knowledge, to walk before the living?" But as this interpretation restricts חָכְרִי to the money-getter in the preceding verse, and necessitates the extraordinary ellipsis of the extraordinary ellipsis, it cannot be entertained. Similarly Rashbam, "what has the wise-man more than the fool? what has this poor man less than the wise man? since he, too, knows how to walk before the living." שֶׁהֵי מִהַיְוֵה לִחְכֹּם יוֹתֵר מִן הַכֹּסֶל בְּעוֹלָם שֶׁשִּׁנְיָהִם חָיִין וְעוֹמְרִין בְּעוֹלָם בְּאֶחָד וְעַל כֵּן אִמְרָתִי הִלֵּל הָבֵל מִהַיְוֵה יוֹתֵר בְּאֶחָד דְּבַר הַתְּחִיל עֲנִי וְהָ גִרָה מִן הַחֲכָמִים שֶׁהֵי הוּא יוֹדֵעַ לֵיכָּן בְּעוֹלָם עִם שָׂרֵי הַחַיִּים כְּאֶחָד מִן הַחֲכָמִים for what advantage has the wise man above the fool in the world, wherein they both live and maintain themselves alike? and therefore I said that all is vanity. "What to the poor man," &c., i.e., wherein does this poor man

begin to be less than the wise man? since he, too, knows how to proceed in the world, with the rest of the living, like one of the wise; but as this explanation also imposes similar harsh ellipses upon the text, it must likewise be rejected. According to Ibn Ezra, it means, "what advantage is there to the wise man above the fool? why should the intelligent poor man walk like the rest of the living?" which he explains, *אִם יִרְכָּשׁ הַחֲכָמִים מִמֶּן אֵין קֵץ וְנִשְׁכַּח לֹא חֲכָמָא כְּנֻסָּה הַכֹּסֶל מִהַיְוֵה שֶׁ לוֹ יוֹעֵנִין מִהַיְוֵה לֵעֲנִי קִרְעַת הַעֲנִי שֶׁהוּא יוֹדֵעַ וְעוֹמֵן מִהַיְוֵה לוֹ לְהִלָּךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ הַכֹּסֶלִים כְּנֻסָּה הַחֲכָמִים, if the wise will always be looking after money, and his desire is as insatiable as the desire of the fool, what advantage has he? And the meaning of לוֹ לֵעֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ is, the poor man who knows and is intelligent, why should he walk in the way of fools like the living? taking יוֹדֵעַ as an adjective joined to חָכְרִי, and as synonymous with חָכְרִי in the preceding clause, which few interpreters will follow. Equally discordant are the versions of the Reformers. Thus Luther has, denn was richtet ein Belfer mehr aus weber ein Narr? Was unterstehet sich der Arme, daß er unter den Lebendigen will sein? for what does the wise man accomplish more than the fool? what does the poor man dare, that he will be among the living? Coverdale, "for what hath the wise more than the fool? what helpeth it the poor that he knoweth to walk before the living?" substantially the same the Bishops' Bible, "for what hath the wise more than the fool? what helpeth it the poor that he knoweth to walk with fools before the living?" and the Geneva Version, which is followed by the Authorised Version, "for what hath the wise man more than the fool? what hath the poor that knoweth how to walk before the living?" Neither has more modern criticism succeeded in lessening this divergency of opinions. According to Bishop Patrick, it is the*

9 knoweth to walk before the living? Better, indeed, is that which is seen by the eyes, than that which is pursued by the

language of the wretch mentioned before, who asks, "What excellence is there in the wise man more than in a fool, especially if he become poor, though he knows," &c. According to Dr. Durell, "the latter part of this verse is an answer to the question in the former part, and ought to be rendered, 'for what hath the wise more than the fool? that which the poor hath who knoweth to walk before the living;' i.e., in point of morals, the wise has no advantage over the poor who knows and practises his duty." Herzfeld, though he also takes the answer to be contained in this verse, reduces it to a still shorter compass, inasmuch as he translates it, denn was hat der Kluge voraus vor dem Thoren? was sogar der Arme? Er verstehet, vor den Lebenden zu wandeln, what advantage has the wise above the fool? what even the poor? He knows to walk before the living. Desvieux, Spohn, Knobel, Ewald, De Wette, Hitzig, Noyes, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c., like the Geneva Version and the Authorised Version, take יוֹדֵעַ לְחַיִּים as descriptive of חָכְרִי, i.e., the poor who knows to walk before the living. But against this is to be urged — 1. That it destroys the symmetry of the verse, inasmuch as the first clause is made to describe two individuals, whilst the whole of the second clause, only one; 2. That the object of comparison is wanted in the second clause; and 3. That as חָכְרִי, the wise man, is compared with כֹּסֶל, the fool, in the first clause, it is evident that חָכְרִי, the poor, in the second clause, must also have an opposite wherewith to be compared, which our rendering supplies.

9. Better, indeed, is that which, &c. It is indeed better to make the best of what we see and is present, than to let our soul wander after gratifications which might be secured, but

are looming in the future. Luther aptly paraphrases this clause, *es ist besser, das gegenwärtige Gut gebrauchen, denn nach anderm gedenken, it is better to enjoy the present good than to think about other good*, and rightly remarks, in his commentary, *Salomo will, daß wir sollen brauchen des Gegenwärtigen, und Gott dafür danken und nicht auf anders denken; wie der Hund in Aesopo nach dem Schatten schnappet, und ließ das Fleisch fallen, Solomon submits that we should enjoy the present, thank God for it, and not speculate about getting other things; like the dog in Aesop, which snapped at the shadow and dropped the meat*. Substantially the same sentiment is expressed in iv. 8. *מַה רְאִיָּה עֵינִים*, the sight of the eye, i.e., that which is the object of sight, that which we can see (*infra*, xi. 9; *Levit. xiii. 12*; *Deut. xxviii. 34*) is before us, is present, which we possess, and can enjoy, is well paraphrased by the Chaldee, *עַל מַה, עֵינֵינוּ רְאִיָּה*, it is better for a man to rejoice over what he has, and is contrasted with *הִלָּךְ בְּקֶשֶׁת*, the wandering of the desire, after things at a distance; ever dissatisfied with what it has, and always running after that which it has not. *הִלָּךְ*, to go, to go to and fro, to wander (*comp. Exod. ix. 23*; *Ps. lxxiii. 9, xci. 6*), is evidently chosen because of *הִלָּךְ* in the preceding verse, by way of paranomasia. The loose paraphrase of the Vulg., *MELIUS EST VIDERE QUOD CUPIAS, QUAM DESIDERARE QUOD NESCIAS, it is better to see what thou desirest than to desire what thou knowest not*, and the explanation of Rashi, *מִי שֶׁהוּא הוֹדֵק לִרְאוֹת עוֹשֵׁר לִמְרוֹא עֵינֵי מִמַּאֲכָל*, it would have been better for him to look at his riches with the sight of his eyes, than to eat and drink, which goes into the body, are irreconcilable with the text, and weaken the sense. Coverdale's version, "the sight of the eyes is better

soul; yet this, too, is vanity and striving after the wind.
 10 What hath been was long ago called by name; moreover, it is known that he is a man, and cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he; what advantage then hath man?

than that the soul should so depart away," is unintelligible, and is rightly rejected by the Bishops' version.

Yet this, too, is vanity, &c. Yet even this enjoyment of the present, however pleasant for the moment, is unable to allay the cravings of the mind, and to impart lasting happiness. That *עַיִן רְאִיתָ* refers to *עֵינַיִם*, *that which the eyes see, i. e.*, the enjoyment of the present, is evident from ii. 1, and the following verses. Ibn Ezra's rendering of this verse, "better that which the eyes can see than the wandering of the soul, though it is vanity and striving after the wind," as if Coheleth had said, *מה יזכר שחולך נפש בדרך הכסלים שנפשו לא חמלא ד' לו הנמצא הנראה לעין אף על פי שהנראה ואשר יעלה במחשבת הנפש הבל why should a wise man's desire walk in the way of fools, whose desire is never satisfied? enough for him that which is tangible and seen with the eye, though that which is seen and enters into his mind is vanity, is therefore inadmissible.*

10. *What hath been, &c.* Coheleth now gives the cause why all the efforts of riches fail to secure solid happiness. It is because that everything which has happened has been immutably fixed beforehand, and because the opulent is, after all, only a frail creature, unable to contest with the Almighty. The Vulg.'s rendering of *כִּי יִהְיֶה* by *QUI FUTURUS EST, he who shall be*, is contrary to the signification of *כִּי*, which is used for *things* and not for *persons*, unwarrantably converts *הָיָה*, the *præterite*, into the future, and is against the usual meaning of this phrase (comp. i. 9, iii. 16, &c.). *קָדַם נִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ*, *it was long ago called by name, i. e.*, its very nature and fate have been predetermined. The Masorites mark in the margin the *ה* in *שְׁמוֹ* as

superfluous, not because "the Punctuators failed to discover the idea which the writer meant to convey," as Stuart asserts, but because they, for some unknown reason, deemed the article unnecessary after *אֲשֶׁר*, as is evident from x. 3. For *קָדַם*, being a contraction of *מִקְדָּם*, see iv. 12. Somewhat remarkable are the interpretations which the Rabbins give of this verse. According to Rashi, the meaning is, "what he was, his fame has long since been proclaimed, and it is now known that he was but a man, and could not contend with him who is stronger than he," and he explains it, *מה שהיה חשיבותו ונודעו, כבר נקרא שמו, כלומר כבר היה ועבר כבר יצא לו שם בשדרה ועתה חלף ונודע שהוא אדם ולא אל וסופו שמת ולא יוכל*, *what has been, i. e., to him, the distinction and eminence he had in his lifetime. "Long since has his name been called," i. e., has been long since, and is now past, long since has his name been famous for it, but it is now vanished. "And it is known that he is a man," i. e., and not a god, and that his end was to die, and could not contend with the angel of death, who was stronger than he.* According to Rashbam, it means, "he who was mighty, whose name is proclaimed, and it is known that he was a mighty man, yet he could not contend with him who is stronger than he," which he explains, *אחור שמו נודע שהוא אדם חסיד ונבד בשעת המיתה לא יכל לזן ולהלחם עם מלאך המות, שהוא חזק, he who was strong, and his name proclaimed, and it is known that he was a distinguished and powerful man, could not, in the hour of death, contend with the angel of death, who is stronger than he.* Ibn Ezra, again, who takes verses 8 and 9 as a caution given to the poor but pru-

11 Moreover, there are many things which increase vanity;
 12 and who knoweth what is good for man in life, the numbered days of his vain life, which he spendeth as a shadow? and

dent man, regards this verse as a continuation of this advice, and explains it, *כבר נקרא שמו ונודע, שהוא אדם כך וכך ולמה יבקש הליכה הנפש עד שהיה כפלוני ויתכן שלא ישיגנו ואין ראוי לאיש שכל שידן עם שחקקו ממנו על כן אין ראוי לו לבקש מה שהיה מנכסשם ויעשה זאת כנגדם*, *what he was, his name has long since been called, and it is known that he is such and such a man; and why should he (i. e., the poor and wise man) seek the desire of his heart till he be like that man, and probably without attaining to it? Now it does not become a wise man to compete with one who is richer than he, hence he ought not to seek that which the living (i. e., the rich fools) seek, and act so before them to be like them.* There can be little doubt that the traditional explanation contained in Rashi and Rashbam, has given rise to Luther's version, *was ist es, wenn einer gleich hochberühmt ist, so weiß man doch, daß er ein Mensch ist, und kann nicht badern mit dem, das ihm zu mächtig ist*, which, as usual, is followed by Coverdale, "what is more excellent than man? yet can he not, in the law, get the victory over him that is mightier than he." Hodgson's translation, "what is that in the creation most mighty? Let its name be mentioned. Confessedly it is man. Yet how unable is he to contend with the power that is above him," competes with any of the Rabbinic expositions.

11. *Moreover, there are many things, &c.* Another reason why all the labour and accumulated riches of man fail to satisfy his soul: (as stated in ver. 7) is, that there are so many things which are got to yield comfort, but which from their nature only increase the void in his heart, and his disappointment. *כִּי* as frequently introduces an additional reason for the assertion made in verse 7, and must therefore be translated *moreover* (vide

supra, v. 2). For *דְּבָרִים*, *things*, see i. 8. 10. *כִּי יִהְיֶה נִקְרָא*, *what advantage hath man?* as will be shewn in the following verse, belongs to the end of the preceding verse. For the interrogative used as an emphatic denial, *vide supra*, i. 3. The Vulgate renders this verse, *VERBA SUNT FLURIMA MULTATQUE IN DISPUTANDO HABENTIA VANITATEM, there are many words, and they have much vanity in disputing, taking דְּבָרִים to denote arguments, or murmurings against God.* Hence the rendering of Coverdale, "a vain thing is it to cast out many words, but what hath a man else?" the explanation of Jermin, Spohn, and others, "for many words increase vanity, i. e., if man were to murmur or complain before God about his lot, he would only contract greater misery;" and the interpretation of Desvoeux, "for there are many arguments to shew the multitude of vanities, i. e., that prevail on this earth;" Ewald and Elster, again, will have it that "the many words" refer to the scholastic philosophy which was then current among the Jews to propound the *summum bonum*; whilst Hitzig and Stuart maintain that it means "truly there are many words increasing vanity, i. e., however, I will say no more, since much speaking has already been condemned, see v. 6." But, apart from the violation which these interpretations do to the text, the rendering of *דְּבָרִים רַבִּים*, *by many words*, is contrary to the scope of the passage, which manifestly speaks of the insufficiency of the *many things* tending to increase or diminish happiness, but of which man is ignorant, as is evident from the next verse.

12. *And who knoweth, &c.* The shortsightedness and ignorance of man render him utterly incapable of knowing what things will yield him comfort during the few years of his

who can tell man what shall be after him under the sun?

vii. 1 A good name is better than sweet perfume, and the day of

earthly existence; so that the very objects which he toils to acquire in order to make him happy, may turn out to belong to the "many things which increase vanity." *The shadow*, playing so important a part in the comforts of Oriental life, owing to the refreshing coolness and shelter which it affords in scorching climates, became, in consequence of its transient and fugitive nature, an appropriate metaphor of the fleeting life of man. Hence we frequently find the days of man's existence upon earth so rapidly over and gone, compared with the shadow which hurries over the fields, flies away, and disappears. Thus David, speaking of human life, says, "our days upon earth are like a shadow" (1 Chron. xxix. 15), "his days are like the passing shadow" (Ps. cxliv. 4); and Job, "our days upon earth are a shadow" (viii. 9), "he flies like a shadow, and doth not abide (xiv. 2). See also *infra*, viii. 13. *י* here, being continuative of *י* in the former verse, must be rendered *and*. This is frequently the meaning of this causal particle when it is repeated (comp. *וְיָדָעַתְּ הָיָא יְיָ לְיָדָעַתְּ*, *for he is a god, and is meditating*, 1 Kings xviii. 27; *וְיָצְדָה קִיּוֹנָה יִצְדָה עֵינָי עֵינָי*, *for trouble is nigh, and there is no help*, Ps. xxii. 12, so also *גַּרְרַר* . . . *גַּרְרַר*, Matt. vi. 32, xviii. 10, 11, xxiv. 27. 28; Gesenius and Fürst, *Lex. s. v.*, *י*). For the phrase *יָדָעַתְּ יְיָ*, *who knows?* i. e., *nobody knows*, see iii. 2. The close connection of this clause with the former part of the preceding verse, leaves no doubt upon my mind that the words *מִדָּוָה לְאָדָם* belong to the end of verse 10. Coheleth assigned a reason, in verse 11, why it is that the acquisition of many things does not yield happiness, "because there are many things which yield the reverse," which by itself is no reason at all, unless we connect this verse with it, "and because no one knows what is good for man," hence, in

their ignorance, they alight upon that which brings the opposite to what they desire. Nothing can therefore be more plain; thus construed, *יְיָ יִשְׁרָאֵל מְרַבִּים הֵנָּה יְיָ מִדָּוָה לְאָדָם*, *for there are many things which increase vanity, and who knows what is good for man, i. e.*, so that, in the selection of things, he may avoid those "which increase vanity," everything is plain. If we want any more proofs of the correctness of this construction, we need only refer to the violent and arbitrary means which commentators have adopted to trace the connection of these verses, and to explain the meaning of *מִדָּוָה לְאָדָם* in its present position. *מִדָּוָה*, being *accusative of measure*, requires no preposition (*vide supra*, ii.). Hengstenberg's remark, that the *י* from *יָדָעַתְּ* is to be supplied before it, is therefore gratuitous. Durell's alteration of it into *מִדָּוָה*, "who knoweth what is better in life for a man than to number the days of his life?" &c. that is, to take account of them so as to turn them to profit, is preposterous. *יָדָעַתְּ*, *to spend his days*, has its analogy in the Greek *ποιεῖν χρόνον* (Acts xv. 33), *ποιεῖν ἡμετέραν* (James iv. 13), and *ποιεῖν ποιήσουσιν ἡμετέραν πολλὰ* (Prov. xiii. 23, Sept.). The *י* in *יָדָעַתְּ* as frequently stands for the relative pronoun (comp. Gen. xlix. 25; Job xxix. 12; Ps. lv. 20; Isa. xiii. 14; Gesenius, *Lex. s. v.*, *י* c). As *יָדָעַתְּ* is used instead of *יָדָעַתְּ* (*vide infra*, viii. 13; Ewald, § 363, a, § 362, b), which is still connected with the two preceding causative particles, viz. *יָדָעַתְּ* = *יָדָעַתְּ* . . . *יָדָעַתְּ*, it must also be rendered by *and*.

1. *A good name, &c.* Seeing, then, that wealth was also unable to avert the doom of man, and to secure lasting good, Coheleth resorted to the last experiment, viz., *prudence*, or what is generally called the *common sense* view of life, thinking that he might thereby secure the desired end. The particular features of this

2 death than the day of his birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, because this is the end of all men, and the living will lay it

view are given in this chapter and in the following one. Like the enumeration of the general events of life in iii. 2-8, the description of this view begins with the commencement and end of life. Paramount to all other considerations, is to lead such a life as to secure a good name. In tropical climates perfumes are in great requisition, and are used especially on occasions of social gatherings, or on visits to persons of rank (2 Sam. xii. 20; Ruth iii. 8; Ps. xlv. 8; Prov. vii. 17; Dan. x. 3; Amos vi. 6; Matt. vi. 17) to prevent the offensiveness of the profuse perspiration to which the melting heat subjects those who are under its influence, as well as to regale and refresh the company. The sweet odour, therefore, diffused by perfumes, became a very beautiful and expressive metaphor for the excellencies of character (comp. Song of Songs i. 3), and an offensive smell is used to express the contrary idea (Gen. xxxiv. 30; Exod. v. 21). *שֵׁם*, *name*, without any adjunct, also means a *good name* (comp. *נָכַר שֵׁם כָּשֶׁר*, *a good name is preferable to riches*, Prov. xxii. 1; Zeph. iii. 19), and, as in the Song of Songs i. 3, forms a paranomasia with *שֵׁן*, which is beautifully imitated by Knoel and De Wetze, *besser gut Gerücht, als gute Gerüche*, and less successfully by Ewald, *besser des guten Namens Luft als guter Salben Duft*. Our language, however, does not admit of an imitation. *שֵׁן*, *good*, when connected with *שֵׁן*, *perfume*, denotes *sweet, delicious*, in which the goodness of the aromatic consists (comp. Ps. cxxxiii. 2; Song of Songs, i. 2).

And the day of death, &c. To such a man who has striven to live a praiseworthy life and has succeeded, the day of his death, which is the day wherein the battle is decided, and he goes off the conqueror, is

better than the day of his birth, when he enters upon the field, ignorant of the strength and snares of the enemy, and doubtful of victory. A story told in the Midrash beautifully illustrates this passage. "Two vessels met at sea, one was going into the harbour and the other was just starting for a long voyage; in the former silence prevailed, whilst in the latter the voice of jubilee was heard. A wise man who witnessed this scene exclaimed, in great astonishment, What a perverted world! the vessel which has safely returned ought to rejoice, inasmuch as it has overcome the perils of the sea, but not the one which is starting and has to weather all the dangers! So we are also not to rejoice when a man is born, when he starts upon the journey of life, and goes to meet the dangers of temptation, but when he is freed from these dangers, finishes his earthly course, and enters peaceably and with a good report into the haven of rest" (compare Leopold Löw, *המסעות*, i. p. 104). And since it is death alone which decides the victory, hence Sirach says, "Judge none blessed before his death," and the Jewish sages caution, in the Mishna, *אל תאמין בעצמך עד יום מותך*, *do not trust thyself till the day of thy death* (Aboth, ii. 4). Failing to see this, Knoel refers this clause to the *fool*, for whom the day of death is better than the day of his birth, because it frees him from the contempt which he experiences in life; whilst Hitzig, Stuart, &c., regard the first clause as comprising a common apothegm, introduced here to illustrate the assertion in the second clause, viz., "a good name is better than sweet perfume, so is the day of death better than one's birth."

2. *It is better, &c.* To obtain and maintain such a name in life and victory in death, means must be

3 to heart. Better is thoughtful sadness than wanton mirth,

chosen and used adequate to this purpose. Visits to houses of mourning and to the graves were and still are regarded by the Jews as productive of a serious and beneficial state of mind, influencing the moral conduct of the visitor, by reminding him of his own frailty and mortality, and the necessity of preparation for it. Hence the Talmudic proverb, *אנרא דני סעמא שחיתא*, the profit from the house of mourning is silent reflection (Berachoth, vi. 72). Thus also the beautiful mediæval poet, Moses Ibn Ezra —

הקציני קצין לעזר על
קלון הורי וכל אנשי שלומי
שאלתימו ואין בקליב ובשכיב
הבנדי בי עדי אבי ואמי
גלי לשון קראני אליהם
והראני לצדיקם קסומי

I sought the abode where all my kindred sleep,
Parents and friends, in their sepulchral home,
I spoke, but none replied. In silence deep,
I seem'd to hear a voice that bade me come,
And lay me on that couch, where none embrace,
And make, with them, my own last resting place.

MOSES BEN EZRA, *Darstellung von Leopold Dukes, Altona, 1839*, p. 101.

In addition to what has already been said upon mourning (*vide supra*, iii. 7), we must remark here that the time of mourning begins as soon as the mourners have returned from the grave, and lasts *seven days* (Gen. i. 10), hence is called *שבעה* among the Jews, during which time the mourners sit barefooted on the ground or footstools, and are visited by their relations, friends, and acquaintances (comp. Sirach, xxii. 12). For *קלנה* instead of *קלנה*, see ii. 7. *בית שמחה*, house of drinking, is a general term for a *joyful place*, hence it is called *בית שמחה*, in verse 4. *דא*, this is, refers to *קץ*, death, which is involved in *אנלי*, mourning. Less appropriate is the paraphrase of the Vulgate, *IN ILLA ENIM FINIS CUNCTORUM ADMONETUR HOMINUM*, for in that we are admonished of the end of

all men; or the explanation of Rashi (נשבל שדאנל הוא סוף כל האדם), who refers it to the mourning itself. The phrase *ליתן אל לב*, to take it to heart, which also occurs in ix. 1, like *ליתן אל לב*, to lay it to heart (Isa. xlii. 25, lvii. 11), is used for *serious consideration, reflection*, and is strangely rendered by the Sept. *ὁ ζῶν δόξας ἀγαθὸν ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ*, the living will put good into his heart; so also the Syriac,

סִבְיָא נִיבִי לְחַלְלָא לְחַסָּא.

which has evidently arisen from taking over *ליתן* from the following verse, as this verb stands in the Hebrew copy in the following line under יתן. The Vulgate, *ET VIVENS COGITAT, QUID FUTURUM SIT*, and the living thinks what is to come, is a good paraphrase.

3. *Better is thoughtful sadness, &c.* The pensive reflections arising from visits to the house of mourning are far preferable to the levity produced by resorts to the haunts of pleasure, inasmuch as seriousness is beneficial to the heart. That *עצב* here is *sad thoughtfulness, sober reflection*, is evident from the fact that this verse describes the state of mind produced by visits to the house of mourning, spoken of in the preceding verse, which is not an *angry*, nor even a *simply sorrowful one*, but is a *reflecting, a thoughtful* state of mind. This is, moreover, corroborated — 1. By the words *יתן אל לב*, and the living will lay it to heart = *reflect upon it*, which most unquestionably describes this state of mind; 2nd, By the term *שחית*, wanton mirth, levity (*vide supra*, ii. 2), which gives the *opposite result*, produced by frequenting the haunts of pleasure; and 3. By its explicative phrase *לעץ פנים*, which means *sad thoughtfulness*, arising from dwelling or reflecting upon thoughts suggested by painful scenes or sufferings, as is evident from the question *מאד פנים רעים*, why are your countenances sad or thoughtful? (Gen. xl. 4) put to

4 for by a serious countenance the heart is improved. The heart of the wise, therefore, is in the house of mourning, and 5 the heart of fools in the house of mirth. It is better for a man to listen to the reproof of a wise man, than to hear the 6 song of fools; for as the crackling of thorns is under the pot,

Pharaoh's butler and baker, who dwelt upon the dream they had in the night, which Hengstenberg seems to have overlooked in his assertion that Nehem. ii. 2, is the only place where *לעץ פנים* occurs in the sense of *sadness, pensiveness*. *לעץ פנים* is well rendered by the Sept. *(ἀγαθὸν θέσται καρδίᾳ)*, the Syriac, Rashi (לִיב יתקן), Rashbam, Luther, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Version, the Auth. Ver., Hodgson, Knobel, Herzfeld, Philippson, Vaihinger, &c., *the heart is made better*, inasmuch as his thoughts are directed to himself; he thinks of the fleetness of life, and the necessity of preparing himself for a speedy departure, and hence is led to regulate his conduct accordingly. The rendering, *the heart is joyful or made glad* (Coverdale, Desvieux, Umbreit, Rosenmüller, Stuart, Elster, &c.) is at variance with the scope of the passage, which speaks of the *moral effect* produced by the visits to the house of mourning. The Vulgate's strange rendering of this verse, *MELIOR EST IRA RISU; QUIA PER TRISTITIAM VULTUS CORRIGITUR ANIMUS DELINQUENTIS, anger is better than laughter, because through the sadness of the countenance the mind of the offender is corrected*, taking *עצב* as the indignation either of God or of pious men, manifested against sin, originated from the Hagadic interpretation given in the Midrash, the Chaldee, and Rashi. It is surprising that Mercer, Grotius, and several other commentators should have followed this interpretation.

4. *The heart of the wise, &c.* This being the case, because such great and solid benefits are to be derived from visits to, and reflections upon

the house of mourning, therefore the wise man will dwell upon it, whilst the fool, who craves after sensuous pleasures, will think of the abodes of mirth. The construction *אֵל לב*, to have the heart in it, expresses both facts mentioned in the preceding verses, viz., *the going to the respective places*, and the consequent *thinking thereupon*.

5. *It is better for a man, &c.* From the lessons of the *dead*, Coheleth passes on to those of the *living*. The wise man not only learns salutary lessons from the silent yet eloquent rebukes of the dead, but will profit by the wholesome corrections of the living, which are sometimes as distasteful as visits to the dead. He will prefer the reproving voice of the prudent, however disagreeable for the moment, to the mirthful notes of the fool. The proper construction of this verse is *טוב לאיש לשמע גערה חכם מן השמע, it is better for a man to hear the reproof of a wise man, than to hear, &c.*; *איש*, of the first clause, is by carelessness of style put into the second clause. In earlier and more energetic Hebrew, *איש* would have been omitted altogether, and we should have had *טוב לשמע . . . לשמע*. The Vulgate's paraphrase of this verse, *QUAM STULTORUM ADULATIONE DECIPI, than to be deceived by the adulation of fools*, taking *שיר* to denote a *plaudit song*, which is followed by Reynolds, Patrick, Desvieux, Stuart, &c., is contrary to the following verse, where *שיר נקלים* is explained by *שיר חקל חקל*, the mirth of the fool.

6. *For as the crackling of thorns, &c.* We have here a reason for the assertion made in the *second* clause of the preceding verse. The wise

17 wise, for thou wilt only make thyself to be forsaken. Be not very wicked, and be not foolish, lest thou die before thy

which always signifies a man acting morally in all things, and is so defined in verse 20, *יָסֵד טוֹב*. 2. The preceding verse, which contains the premises to this, describes the fate of men really pious and really wicked. Now, to make Coheleth say that because some who were sincerely good died prematurely, in spite of their goodness, therefore be not thou affectedly good, is most preposterous. The only legitimate conclusion is, that he cautions us against being very righteous, pursuing piety much, in a good sense Dr. Hammond (Answ. to Cawdry, chap. ii. § 2). Holden, Adam Clarke, Stuart, and others, who saw that "these interpretations are strained and far-fetched," resorted to their favourite but equally arbitrary expedient of putting these words into the mouth of an objector. We need not, however, adopt any violent means to make this verse harmonise with orthodoxy, inasmuch as the "politic precept unto neutrality and indifference in good courses" here propounded, is in accordance with the so-called common-sense view of life discussed in this section, and is not the final opinion of Coheleth. That comes at the end of the book, and must not be anticipated here. For *הַרְבֵּה*, much, see i. 16, and the adverbial signification of *יִרְאֶה*, see ii. 15. *הַתְּחִילָה* is rendered by Gesenius, Fürst (Lex. s. v.), and most modern commentators, to be wise in one's own eyes; but this is contrary to *הַרְבֵּה* *לִי*, *הַתְּחִילָה*, Exod. i. 10, the only other passage where the Hithpael occurs, and where it incontestably signifies to make one's-self wise, to shew one's-self wise, to act with wisdom, in reality, which signification this conjugation frequently has (comp. *הַתְּחִילָה*, to shew one's-self strong, 2 Sam. x. 12; 2 Chron. xiii. 7, 8; *הַתְּחִילָה*, to shew one's-self angry, Deut. i. 37, iv. 21, ix. 8, 20; Gesen. § 54, 3; Ewald, § 124). Besides the antithesis *אֵל הַתְּחִילָה*,

which speaks of real, and not affected, foolishness, shews beyond doubt that the wisdom under consideration must also be real. We thus obtain another proof that the piety against which Coheleth cautions is sincere, and not affected, piety. For the Pattach under the final syllable of *הַתְּחִילָה* instead of *הַתְּחִילָה* with a Tzere, see Gesen. § 54, 3, note. *הַתְּחִילָה* is the Hithpael fut. for *הַתְּחִילָה*—the *ח* of the syllable *הַתְּחִילָה* being assimilated before *י, ו, מ, נ, י, ו, ח* (compare Gesen. § 54, 2, 6; Ewald, § 124, c)—and means make thyself desolate, deserted, or lonely (comp. Job xvi. 7, where all his friends desert him for his piety), so the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version in the margin, Desvoeux, Durell, Hodgson, Hitzig, Stuart, &c. The Septuagint's rendering of it by *μήποτε ἐκπληγήσῃς*, lest thou be confounded, which is followed by the Vulgate *ne obstupescas*, lest thou be stupified, does not at all militate against our explanation of the argument. Luther, Coverdale, the Authorised Version in the text, and others, who translate it, destroy thyself, sever the connection of this verse with the preceding one, since the death of the righteous mentioned there is not caused by themselves, through imprudence, but is permitted by an inscrutable Providence. The interrogative, as often, is used for an emphatic affirmation (*vile supra*, i. 3), and the sense of the passage is better expressed by rendering it, with the Septuagint and Vulgate, in the affirmative.

17. Be not very wicked, &c. But, on the other hand, we are to be as moderate in the indulgence of sin as we are to be temperate in the practice of virtue. For, whilst it is true that a man may live a long life in spite of his wickedness, yet it is also true that there are certain laws of nature which cannot be transgressed with impunity, violation of these will most

18 time. It is better that thou shouldest lay hold of this, and also not let go thy hand from that, for whoso feareth God

assuredly be visited with premature death. It is almost needless to say that this verse shared the fate of the preceding one. Ibn Ezra's forced attempt to get over the difficulty will shew to what tortures the text of Scripture is put, to wring from it sentiments which should be compatible with the interpreter's pre-conceived notions. "Know," he says, (ורע כי הרשעות היא להחזיק בדבר הזה) "that wicked here means to be engaged in worldly matters." Strange that Herzfeld should follow this interpretation. *זֶה*, time, also the right time, proper time (comp. *infra*, x. 17; Prov. xv. 23), which is rendered still more emphatic by the pronoun (comp. Ps. i. 3, civ. 27). The interrogation, as in the former verse, is used for an emphatic assertion.

18. It is better that, &c. Since great piety causes isolation, and great wickedness brings about premature death, we must not give ourselves up entirely to either, but strive to take the middle course. A God-fearing man will know how to avail himself of both. The repeated *זֶה . . . הַזֶּה*, this . . . that, is rightly referred by the Chaldee, Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Knobel, Herzfeld, Vaibinger, &c., to *זֶה*, piety, and *הַזֶּה*, sin, their immediate antecedents, although, as we have seen, these commentators differ in their interpretation of these terms. Most modern commentators, however, (e.g., Reynolds, Patrick, Hodgson, Holden, Noyes, Stuart, &c.), refer this to the counsel given in verse 18 to avoid wickedness, and that to the advice in verse 16 to abstain from over-righteousness. But, 1. According to this interpretation, this verse contains no farther development of the precepts already given in verses 16 and 17, and is mere tautology. 2. Coheleth nowhere refers to several precepts by distinct pronouns; and 3.

This explanation proceeds from a misunderstanding of the view here propounded. *יָרָא אֱלֹהִים*, one who fears God, according to this theory. *זֶה*, to go, to go along, to proceed with. *זֶה*, both, i. e., *זֶה*, righteousness, and *זֶה*, sin, to which the two pronouns *זֶה* . . . *הַזֶּה*, referred in the preceding clause. Rashbam beautifully explains the whole verse *טוֹב לָךְ שְׂמַחְתָּ בָּהּ בְּצֶדֶק לְחַיֵּה דְּרִיקָה וְכֵן מִוֶּחַ מִן הָרָעָה אֶל הַטֹּב וְלֹא חֲסִיר יָדְךָ כִּמְנוּ כִּי אַחֲרוֹ אִם שְׂמַחְתָּ יָרָא שְׂמִים יִצְאֵה דִּי חֲרָבָה בְּכֹלֵם שְׂמַחְתָּ שׁוֹמֵר אֶחָד עֲצָמוֹ שְׂמִינִי דְּרִיקָה הָרְבָה וְאִינוּ רָשָׁע וְרַחֲמֵי מִדָּה וְכוּ' it is good that thou shouldest take hold of this, i. e., on righteousness, to be righteous, and also from that, i. e., from sin, do not withdraw thine hand from it; for whoso fears God will proceed properly in both, as he takes care not to be very righteous, nor to sin above measure, &c. The Vulgate, which renders *זֶה* *אֱלֹהִים* by *NIHIL NEGLIGIT*, gives the same meaning to this phrase in the negative. So also the Syriac, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Durell, Hitzig, Stuart, &c. The rendering of *זֶה* by *escape* (Luther, Coverdale, &c.), come forth of (the Bishop's Bible, the Geneva Version, the Auth. Version, &c.), avoid (Desvoeux), will be guided by (Hodgson), &c., are contrary to the *usus loquendi*, inasmuch as it is an intransitive verb, and cannot govern the accusative. The appeal to the phrase *זֶה* *אֱלֹהִים* (Exod. ix. 29, 33), is inapposite, as this case is not exactly analogous. The rendering of the Septuagint, ἀγαθόν τὸ ἀντὶχεῖσθαι σε ἐν τούτοις, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου μὴ μείνῃς ἐν χερσὶ σου, it is good that thou hold fast to this, and also by this defile not thine hand, changing *זֶה* into *הַזֶּה*; and the Vulgate, BONUM EST TE SUSTENTARE JUSTUM, SED ET AB ILLO NE SUBTRAHAS MANUM TUA; QUIA QUI TIMET DEUM, NIHIL NEGLIGIT, it is good for thee to sustain the just, nay, from him withdraw not thine hand; for whoso fears God neglects nothing, taking *זֶה* in a double sense, viz., it*

22 speak evil against thee; for thy heart knoweth that oftentimes
23 thou also hast spoken evil of others. All this have I tried
by wisdom; I wished to be wiser, but it was far from me.

dale, the Bishops' Bible, &c., *reviling, abusing, or speaking evil of thee*; the Piel of *לָלַץ* is often used in this sense (comp. *infra*, x. 20; Levit. xix. 14; 2 Sam. xvi. 5). For the construction of *לָלַץ*, see Ewald, § 284, 6. The Hagadic explanation of this verse, *אִיךָ פִּי מִלֵּילָא דִּמְלִילָא לָךְ רְשִׁיעָא לָךְ חֲסִידָא לָךְ לְקַבְּלָהוֹן דְּלֵא יִיחִין יוֹמִין דִּי חֲשִׁיבִין יָהּ עֲנִידָךְ לָךְ יֵלִישׁ לָךְ, also all the words which the wicked speak to thee, give not thy heart to accept them, lest the days come when thou shalt hear thy servant curse thee*, gave rise to the rendering of the Septuagint, *καὶ εἰς πάντας λόγους οὓς λαλήσουσιν ἀσεβεῖς μὴ θῆς καρδίαν σου*, and also the Syriac Version, *וְלֹא לְחַלָּא פִּי מִלֵּילָא לָךְ*

וְנִפְלִיכָא לְעִינֵי לֵילִישׁ לָךְ
and also do not give thy heart to all the words which the wicked speak.

22 For thy heart knoweth, &c. To prove what has been said, Coheleth appeals to our own experience. We know that we frequently dwell upon the faults of our neighbours, and it is but natural that they should do the same. If we therefore like to be inquisitive, we must expect to hear the same free expression of unpleasant things about ourselves which we exercise with regard to others, and which they would hear if they instituted the same inquiries. *בְּרַב־מֵרָעָה*, *times*, belongs to *אֵתָּה*, *thou*, where, however, it is repeated, because the intervening words are too many. The subordinate *בְּרַב־מֵרָעָה*, *many times*, depending upon *לָלַץ*, *thou hast spoken evil of*, is placed first, for the sake of emphasis. The regular construction would be *כִּי יֵדַע לָנֶכְדָּה אֵתָּה לְעִינֵי אֲחֵרִים בְּרַב־מֵרָעָה*, which is rightly given by the Vulgate *scit enim conscientia tua, quia et tu crebro maledixisti aliis*, Rashbam *וְיָדַעְתָּ אֵתָּה בְּרַב־מֵרָעָה*

אֲחֵרִים, Luther *denn dein Herz weiß, daß du andern auch oftmals gesündigt hast*, Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible "for thine own heart knoweth, that thou thyself also hast oft-times spoken evil by other men," Hodgson, Herzfeld, &c. The Geneva Version ("for oftentimes also thine heart knoweth that thou likewise hast cursed others"), which is followed by the Authorised Version, is a departure from Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible for the worse. The rendering of Knobel, De Wette, Hitzig, Stuart, Vaihinger, &c., *for thou knowest many times or many instances when, &c.*, taking *בְּרַב־מֵרָעָה* as the accusat. of the object governed by *יֵדַע*, is owing to a misunderstanding of this emphatic construction. To connect this verse with its rendering of the former one, the Septuagint translates it *ὅτι πλείστανες ποιεῖς καὶ καὶ καθόλου πολλάς μακάρις καρδίαν σου*, *for many times he will do thee evil, and will repeatedly afflict thy heart, &c.*; it substitutes, according to the Hagadic mode of interpretation, *יֵדַע*, *he shall do thee evil, shall afflict thee*, for *יֵדַע*, which is similar in appearance, making *ἀσεβῆς* (*שֶׁפֶר*), *the sinner*, which was supplied in the preceding verse, the subject, and doubly explains the clause, first *בְּרַב־מֵרָעָה*, and then *בְּרַב־מֵרָעָה*, because the Hiphil *יֵדַע* signifies both *to do evil, morally*, and *to afflict*. We have had such modes of explanation before, see verse 18.

23. *All this have I tried, &c.* This line of conduct thus set forth, Coheleth tells us he had tried himself by means of *practical wisdom*, which he had so largely acquired, and therefore could speak experimentally upon the subject (comp. i. 12). He, moreover, tells us that, stimulated by her salutary assistance in *practical* life, he wished for her help in another direction; he wanted to obtain still

24 Far remaineth what was far, and deep, deep! who can find
25 it out? I and my heart turned to know and diligently to

greater wisdom, so as to be able to fathom and comprehend the mysteries of Providence, but that in this he utterly failed. For *וְהָיָה*, *that*, see ii. 2, and *וְנִסְּתָה*, *to try*, see ii. 1. *אָמַרְתִּי*, *I said*, also *I thought, I wished*, is closely connected with the *future* (*אֲמַרְתִּי*) which is subordinate to it, and must be rendered, *I thought to be wise, or wiser* (comp. *אֲמַרְתִּי*, i. e., *I know not I shall flatter*, i. e., *I know not to flatter*, Job xxxii. 22; Isa. xlii. 21; Gesen. § 142, 3, c.; Ewald, § 285). The phrase is well explained by Ibn Ezra, *בְּקִשְׁתִּי שְׂמֹחִים וְהָיָה רִבְרִי וְרוּחִי יִתֵּר וּמִצְאִי שְׂמֹחִים וְהָיָה רִבְרִי וְרוּחִי יִתֵּר*, *I wished to be wiser, but I found that this is too remote an object*.

24. *Far remaineth what was far, &c.* To shew the failure of his attempt to fathom by wisdom the counsels of the Almighty, Coheleth says, that that which had appeared to him inexplicable in the moral government of God prior to his obtaining wisdom still continued to be so afterwards. The same sentiment is expressed in viii. 17. The repetition *עֲמֹק עֲמֹק*, in the second clause, shews that *עֲמֹק* must also be repeated in the first clause, and that it has been omitted for the sake of brachylogy. Fully expressed, the verse would be *עֲמֹק הָיָה מִמֶּנִּי עֲמֹק עֲמֹק מִמֶּנִּי עֲמֹק עֲמֹק*, *far remains what was far, and deep remains what was deep*. The Septuagint, connecting it with the preceding verse, renders it *ἐνταῦθα σοφισθῆναι καὶ αὐτὴν ἐμμενῆναι ἀπ' ἐμοῦ μακρὰν ὑπερ ὅ ἐν καὶ βαθὺν βάθος*, *I said I will be wise, but it was far from me, beyond what it was, and great measure*; thus also the Vulgate, *dixi: Sapiens efficiar; et ipsa longius recessit a me, multo magis quam erat, et alla profunditas*, and the Syriac

ܐܡܪܬܝ ܐܝܬܝܢ ܥܡܝܢܐ ܥܡܝܢܐ ܥܡܝܢܐ ܥܡܝܢܐ

ܥܡܝܢܐ ܥܡܝܢܐ ܥܡܝܢܐ ܥܡܝܢܐ

ܥܡܝܢܐ ܥܡܝܢܐ ܥܡܝܢܐ ܥܡܝܢܐ referring the whole verse to wisdom, which is followed by Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible, "I thought to be wise, but she went further from me than she was before, yea and so deep that I might not reach unto her." But this is inadmissible, because it cannot be taken as a *comparative*, and because the feminine *ܥܡܝܢܐ* and the masculine *ܥܡܝܢܐ* cannot both be the predicate of the same subject. Luther's Version, *es ist sehr tief, wer will es finden? which is literally adopted in the Geneva Bible*, "it is far off, what may it be? and it is a profound deepness, who can find it?" and explained in the margin "meaning wisdom," the Authorised Version, Knobel, De Wette, Noyes, Hitzig, Stuart, Vaihinger, &c., "that which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?" besides referring the *fem.* *ܥܡܝܢܐ* and the *masc.* *ܥܡܝܢܐ* to the same subject, violate the uniform meaning of the phrase *ܥܡܝܢܐ ܥܡܝܢܐ*, and render the praeiterite *ܥܡܝܢܐ* in the present. The loose renderings of Desvieux, "what-ever is so far off, nay removed to the greatest depth, who shall find it?" and Hodgson, "how distant is it, and deep! Deep! who can reach it?" incur the same objections.

25. *I and my heart turned, &c.* From this vain attempt to speculate about remote and profound things (23-24) Coheleth returned with greater eagerness than ever (*ܥܡܝܢܐ ܥܡܝܢܐ*) to the teachings of *practical wisdom*, setting forth her salutary counsels. The caution now given is to be guarded against *women* (25-29), for they engender and perpetuate evil and misery. For *ܥܡܝܢܐ*, *to turn from one thing, construed with ܐܝܢܐ*, indicating the other thing, to which the transition is made, see ii. 20. *ܥܡܝܢܐ* is not *sensu meo* (Symmachus), nor *animo meo* (the Vulgate), *ܥܡܝܢܐ*

28 to find the result — and what my soul is still seeking, and I have not found; one man among a thousand I have found,

his reasons, Coheleth begins with *הִנֵּה*, see, behold, to secure special attention. That by *זֶה*, this, the sacred writer points to what follows (Deavocux, Knobel, Heiligstedt, Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, &c.), and not to what precedes (Mendelssohn, Rosenmüller, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c.), is evident from verse 29, where the same words (*זֶה הוּא*) are used to call attention to what he is going to say. Grotius, Durell, Houbigant, Michaelis, Van der Palm, Spohn, Knobel, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, &c., alter *הוּא הוּא* into *הוּא הוּא*, maintaining that the words are wrongly divided, and that the article *ה* has, by a mistake, been detached from *הוּא* and attached to *הוּא*. In support of this they submit — 1. That *הוּא* is construed with the masculine verb *הוּא* in all the other passages where it occurs (compare i. 1, 2, 12, and xii. 8, 9, 10); 2. That the phrase *הוּא הוּא* actually occurs in xii. 8, where *הוּא* has the article; and 3. That this is supported by the Sept. and the Syriac. But this emendation is arbitrary, as well as unnecessary, and proceeds from a misunderstanding of the word *הוּא*, which describes Solomon as *personified wisdom*, and hence may be construed both with masculine and feminine verbs, according to the nature of the case (*vide supra*, p. 7). The article in xii. 8 has a special significance there, and would be useless here. As to the appeal to the ancient versions, it is preposterous to seek support for this emendation from the rendering *ἐκεῖνος ὁ ἐκκλησιαστής* of the Septuagint, since the Greek verb has no distinction between masculine and feminine, and the masculine article *ὁ* before *ἐκκλησιαστής* only shews that *ἐκκλησιαστής* is a masculine noun in Greek, just as the article *ἡ* before *καρδία* shews that *καρδία* is feminine; and no one would ever try to establish therefrom, by the same parity of

reasoning, that *זֶה* is feminine in Hebrew. The Syr. *ܐܝܢܐ ܥܡܝܢܐ* proves nothing, inasmuch as it only shews that in the copy from which this version was made, the *ה* was altogether wanting. The feminine *ܐܝܢܐ* is used in a *neuter sense for one thing* (*vide supra*, i. 11), and the *verb substantive* *ܐܝܢܐ*, which, as frequently, is omitted, must be supplied after it, i. e., *ܐܝܢܐ ܐܝܢܐ ܐܝܢܐ*, *one thing to one thing was to find*, &c., that is to say, *every individual thing peculiar to either sex was, or came in, to make up the result*, thus shewing that all partiality has been carefully excluded. In the translation this clause is better put in parenthesis, to mark the intimate connection of this verse with the following one, which the improper division of verses has entirely destroyed.

28. *And what, &c.* Coheleth now tells us what he has found and what he has not found in the course of his examination. A man virtuous and upright, and deserving this appellation, he has found among a thousand, but a woman possessing these characteristics which make her worthy of this name he has not found among a similar number; or, in other words, though upright men are not very numerous, yet they are to be found, but upright women are scarcely to be met with. This, then, being the case, the allegation in verse 26 is fully established. For the Eastern notions of women we must refer to verse 26, and my commentary on the Song of Songs, pp. 14–19, and add here the remarks of St. Chrysostom, that the devil, when depriving Job of his substance, children, and health, left his wife, “because he thought that she would be a great furtherance unto him to conquer that saint of God” (Homel. 38 in Epistol. ad Corinth.). “what is woman, but a punishment that

29 but a woman among all that number I have not found: only behold this have I found, that God made man upright, but

cannot be driven away, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, one beloved for the colour of good?” (Homel. 6 in Matt., quoted by Jermin, p. 243); and the saying of Mohammed, that among men there were many perfect, but among women only four — Asiah, the wife of Pharaoh; Mary, the mother of Christ; Cadijah, his wife; and Fatima, his daughter” (Pocock, Specimen Hist. Arab. p. 188, ed. White, Oxon. 1806; Prideaux, Life of Mahomet, p. 61, quoted by Holden, p. 124). *אֲשֶׁר*, that, at the beginning of this verse, depends upon *זֶה הוּא*, behold this, in the foregoing verse; so that *זֶה*, and *this*, or the simple copula *ו*, is to be supplied before it, and is properly given by the Syriac, Luther, and the Geneva Bible; hence the Sept., the Vulgate, the Authorised Version, also rightly connect this verse with the preceding one. Holden's assertion, that by doing this these versions “produce the contradiction of saying that the Preacher had not found what before he asserted that he had found,” proceeds from his having mistaken the sense of the sacred writer; since the *finding* and *not finding* refer to two separate subjects, the former to men, the latter to women. To us it is a matter of great surprise that commentators should not have alighted upon this simple and natural explanation of the text, but have resorted to a multitude of forced and conflicting interpretations too numerous to be repeated. The words *אֲשֶׁר נַפְשִׁי*, my soul is still seeking, are added, to shew the difficulty of the task. Coheleth had not only devoted the same space of time in his search after a good woman which he gave to his search after a good man, but he tells us that *he is still in quest of her*. The absence of the *Dagesh* in *נַפְשִׁי* here, and in *נַפְשִׁי* in the following

verse, is owing to the peculiarity that the radical letters in the forms of Piel and Pael, which have *Sheva* under them, may drop the characteristic *Dagesh* (comp. Ps. lxxiv. 7; Ezek. xvii. 7; Gesenius, § 20, 8; Ewald, § 64). That *אֲשֶׁר* and *אֲשֶׁר* stand for *אֲשֶׁר אִישׁ*, an upright man, and *אֲשֶׁר אִשָּׁה*, an upright woman, is evident from verse 26, and especially from the following verse. *אֲשֶׁר* is not unfrequently used for *אִישׁ*, like *ἀνθρωπος* for *ἄνθρωπος* in Greek, and *homo* for *vir* in Latin (comp. Ps. cv. 14, with 1 Chron. xvi. 21, and Matt. xix. 10). *אֲשֶׁר*, a thousand, is put for a large round number (comp. Ps. 1. 10, lxxxiv. 11, xc. 4, cv. 8), and hence the phrase one in a thousand became an idiomatic expression for something rare (compare Job ix. 3, xxxiii. 23). *אֲשֶׁר*, men, is to be supplied after *אֲשֶׁר*, in a thousand. *אֲשֶׁר*, among this, i. e., large number. Though the number *thousand* has evidently been suggested by the number of Solomon's wives and concubines (1 Kings xi. 1–9), yet it would be contrary to the scope of the passage to refer this description to them. For if the *thousand men* refer to the male sex generally, the common laws of language and exegesis demand that the *thousand women* should be interpreted of the female sex generally. Bishop Patrick's attempt to elude this dilemma by trying to restrict the thousand men to the multitude who attended upon Solomon in the court, is simply gratuitous, inasmuch as there is not the slightest intimation that Solomon's courtiers or servants are here intended; but, on the contrary, the following verse clearly shews that mankind generally are meant.

29. *Only, behold, &c.* To avoid, however, all misunderstanding as regards the origin of this state of things, and to shew that the degeneracy of both men and women, great

viii. 1 they seek out many devices. Who is like the wise man? and who like him that understandeth the meaning of

in the one case and great in the other, has no other source than the human heart, Coheleth finds it necessary to add that when man left the hands of the Creator he was not so; God created men upright, but they corrupted themselves. וְכִי, only, is used for singling out the subject to which particular attention is drawn (comp. Isa. xxvi. 13). That הָאָדָם is here used in a generic sense for mankind, is evident from the plural pronoun הֵמָּה, they, thus affording another irrefragable proof that the characteristics mentioned in the preceding verses do not belong to particular classes, but to mankind. For the Piel וְכִי without the Dagesh in the *ו*, see the foregoing verse. הִפְנוּתִי, devices (vide verse 25), has what is called the Dagesh dirimens or euphonic (comp. Gesen. § 20, 2; Ewald, § 188, f). The Vulgate's rendering of הִפְנוּתִי וְהִפְנוּתִי, ET IPSE SE INFINITIS MISCUERIT QUÆSTIONIBUS, and he has entangled himself with an infinity of questions, connecting it with the following verse; which is followed by Coverdale, "God made man just and right, but they seek diverse subtilties, whereas no man hath wisdom and understanding to give answer thereunto;" and Ewald, who explains it doch wenn das wahrhaft tugendhafte Weib sehr selten sein mag (B. 28) so ist doch nicht weniger gewiß, daß der Mensch, von Geburt (Natur) unschuldig und einfach, gerade und redlich erschaffen, im Gewirre des Lebens sich selbst viele unnöthige Fragen und Grübeleien schafft, welchem Pänge zum Flügel man nicht einseitig nachgeben soll (B. 29) aufgebend vielmehr unnütze Spitzfindigkeiten (3. B. die über schlechtere Natur des Weibes, welches doch vielleicht näher betrachtet ein Irrthum ist vergl. ir. 9), soll man die reine Wahrheit und Weisheit suchen, though a really virtuous woman may be very rare (verse 28), yet it is not less certain that man in his birth

(nature) is made innocent and simple, upright and honest; that he creates for himself, in the turmoil of life, many unnecessary questions and enquiries, and that we are not to yield one-sidedly to this propensity of prying into things (verse 29), but, relinquishing useless speculations—such as about the more degenerate nature of woman, which, perhaps, if more closely examined would not be true (comp. ix. 9)—we are to pursue real truth and wisdom (chap. ix.)—destroys the manifest antithesis between וְכִי and הִפְנוּתִי, and is against the scope of the passage, which has nothing to do with speculation, but with moral degeneracy.

1. Who is like the wise man? &c. The next lesson which this common sense view of life teaches is gentle submission. He who is truly wise, who understands the import of this matter, or of this view of life, has no compeer. The abnormal הָחֵקֶם, instead of the normal חָקֶקֶם, with the *ה* dropped, and its vowel under the *ו* comparison, is not of unfrequent occurrence, especially in later books (comp. Ezek. xl. 25, xlviii. 22; 2 Chron. x. 7, xxv. 10, xxix. 27; Nehem. ix. 19, xii. 38; Gesen. § 52, 2; Ewald, § 244, a). הָחֵקֶם stands for חָקֶקֶם, the *ו* comparison, as usually, is to be supplied before it from the preceding noun חָקֶקֶם. The expression חָקֶקֶם is purely Chaldaic, and only occurs in Daniel, and denotes interpretation, signification, import, meaning. חָקֶקֶם, thing, matter (see *supra*, i. 10), refers to the view of life under consideration. The phrase חָקֶקֶם חָקֶקֶם exactly corresponds to the Hebrew חָקֶקֶם חָקֶקֶם in 1 Sam. xvi. 18. The interrogative, as frequently, is used for an emphatic negative, i. e., 'no one can be compared with the wise man, and with him who knows the import of this view of life.' The rendering of the Septuagint, τίς οἶδεν σοφούς or σοφίαν; καὶ τίς οἶδεν λόγον ῥήματος; who knows the

the thing? The wisdom of this man enlighteneth his countenance, and his stern visage is changed. I say, then, Obey the king's command, and especially because of the oath

wise or his wisdom? and who knows the interpretation of the word? dropping the *ו* comparison from חָקֶקֶם, making it the accusative to חָקֶקֶם, which is taken over from the following clause, as well as referring it to the wisdom of God, and understanding by חָקֶקֶם the Scripture, is as usual to be traced to Hagadic influence, as may be seen from the Chaldee, which paraphrases it כִּי הוּא חָקֶקֶם חָקֶקֶם לְחֵקֶם, who is the wise man, that can stand before the wisdom of God, and fathom the import of his word, like the prophets! and especially from the Midrash Rabba, and Yalkut.

The wisdom of this man, &c. This clause gives the reason for the sentiment expressed in the former one. He has no equal, because his wisdom, or the prudent view of life according to which he regulates his conduct, makes him cheerful, and teaches him submission, to endure that which he cannot cure. As the face is the mirror of the soul, it is especially mentioned in describing the state of our innermost feelings, הָאֵר חָקֶקֶם, to light up the countenance, i. e., to brighten, to cheer, to make happy (comp. Numb. vi. 25; Ps. xix. 9; Prov. xvi. 15, and the synonymous expression, חָקֶקֶם, to brighten up, to be cheerful, Ps. xxxiv. 6; Isa. lx. 5). That חָקֶקֶם, strength of face, means resoluteness, sternness, or rigour of his face, as Holden, Herzfeld, Philippon, Elster, &c., rightly maintain, is evident from Deut. xxvii. 60, where חָקֶקֶם חָקֶקֶם is explained by חָקֶקֶם חָקֶקֶם, which does not regard the person of the old, inasmuch as it could not properly be said that an enemy is impudent to the young, and therefore must mean a foe treating with rigour both old and young. חָקֶקֶם stands for חָקֶקֶם (comp. 2 Kings xxv. 25, and Jer. lvi. 33, with Lam. iv. 1); for the cause of it, see *supra*, vii. 26. The Septuagint's rendering

חָקֶקֶם חָקֶקֶם by καὶ ἀναδίδε προσώπου αὐτοῦ μισθίσεται, and his shameless face will be hated, altering חָקֶקֶם into חָקֶקֶם, the Niphal future of חָקֶקֶם, to hate, which is followed by Luther (wer aber frech ist, der ist feindselig), Coverdale ("but malice putteth it out of favour"), Desvieux ("whereas a sullen look would make him an object of hatred"), Durell ("but he that hath an impudent countenance shall be hated"), Hodgson ("but austerity in the looks is hateful"), &c., is both unjustifiable, and mars the connection of this verse with the sequel. The Vulg., ET POTENTISSIMUS FACIEM ILLIUS COMMUTABIT, and the omnipotent will change his face, taking חָקֶקֶם as nominative, and subject, חָקֶקֶם as the accusative, governed by the verb which follows it, and altering חָקֶקֶם, the future Pual, into חָקֶקֶם, Piel, is to be repudiated, because—1. It assigns to חָקֶקֶם a sense which it never has, since the term is invariably used as an abstract and not a concrete; 2. It disjoins the idiomatic and well-known phrase חָקֶקֶם חָקֶקֶם; and 3. It arbitrarily alters the text. The same objections are to be urged against Hitzig's rendering, und Groß sein Antlitz entstellte, espoused by Stuart ("but haughtiness disfigureth his face"), which follows the construction and emendation of the Vulgate, though assigning a different but equally unjustifiable sense to חָקֶקֶם, and adopts the antithetic form of the Septuagint.

2. I say, then, Obey, &c. Having submitted that this prudent view of life will make us adapt ourselves and cheerfully yield to the pressure of circumstances, Coheleth deduces therefrom the lesson of submission and obedience to the authority reigning over us for the time being, and especially as submission and obedience have been solemnly promised with an oath invoking the name of God. The oath referred to alludes

5 and who shall say unto him, What doest thou? Whoso keepeth the commandment knoweth not an evil word. More-

whatever he pleases," because, or inasmuch as (כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ), his royal mandate (דְּבַר־מַלְכּוֹ) is power itself, and no one can call into question his doings, or bring him to account for them. How useless and hazardous, therefore, for a subject to disrespect or bid defiance to the person or power of a sovereign. כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ, not *wherever* (the Chaldee בְּכֹכֶּךָ, in *every place, where* (בְּכֹכֶּךָ), in *every place, where* (בְּכֹכֶּךָ), as Rashi (בְּכֹכֶּךָ), the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, &c.), which makes this clause a needless repetition of the sentiment expressed in the second clause of the preceding verse, but *because, since, inasmuch as* (comp. ii. 16, vii. 2), as Rashi (בְּכֹכֶּךָ) and almost all modern commentators rightly render it. The Sept. (καθὼς βασιλεὺς ἐξουσιάζει λαόν), and the Syr.

أَمَّنْ بِمُطْلَاقٍ مُلْكًا مُلْكًا

he speaks like a powerful king, which have evidently given rise to Coverdale's rendering, "like as when a king giveth a charge, his commandment is mighty; even so, who may say unto him," &c., adopted in the Bishops' Bible, are irreconcilable both with the text and context. The Vulg. (ET SERMO ILLIUS POTESTATE PLENUS EST, and his word is full of power), Luther (In des Königs Wort ist Gewalt), and Hodgson entirely ignore כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ. Rashi's explanation (דְּבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשַּׁל הָאֵל), which is adopted by Desvoeux, who renders it, "the word of a king is a despotic commander," submitting that "the word of a king seems to be personified by a very intelligible prosopopoeia," is not only, as he himself concedes, too bold in our Western languages, but also too bold and incongruous for Eastern languages, and, at all events, ought not to be ascribed to them without incontestable proof, which, however, Desvoeux has failed to adduce. His argument, that כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ

has a personal signification in Chaldee, which is a sufficient inducement to retain it in Hebrew, is untenable, inasmuch as in Chaldee too כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ is originally an abstract noun, and, like many other abstracts, both in that language and in Hebrew, obtained a concrete signification. This is especially the case with those nouns which denote authority, and the very word authority is so used in our language.

6. Whoso keepeth the commandment, &c. But though the part of wisdom is not to defy the power of a potentate, even if that power is abused, and is made to weigh heavily upon us, yet such abuses are not the rule, but the exception. Generally speaking, a peaceful and obedient subject, who submits to the institutions of the sovereign, will not experience evil words. כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ, i. e., כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ, the commandment of the king, so that כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ is the same as כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ in verse 2. כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ, to see, to observe, to perceive, experience, either with the eye, ear, or feelings; hence, also, to hear (comp. Gen. ix. 24; Levit. v. 1). That כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ cannot mean here an evil thing, an evil work, a wrong action, is evident from the words כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ; for to say, "whoso keepeth the commandment shall know no evil thing," is simply to say, *whoso keeps the commandments does not transgress them, or, the obedient are not disobedient*. To avoid this truism, the Vulgate was constrained to resort to an inconsistency, and translate it here *non experietur quidquam mali*, which is followed by Luther (nicht nichts Böses erfahren), Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible ("shall feel no harm"), the Geneva Bible and the Authorised Version ("shall feel or know no evil thing"), thus making the same words כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ to signify two different things, a wrong action, and infliction, punishment, which is against all rules of

over the heart of the wise man knoweth a time of judgment; 6 for there is a time of judgment for everything, when the

language; a careful comparison of verses 3 and 5 will shew that the same thing is intended.

Moreover the heart, &c. Another reason why a wise man will yield the obedience enjoined in verse 2 is because he knows that there is an appointed time of judgment, when the tyrant shall be brought to retribution by a power infinitely above the strength of any potentate; knowing this, he submissively and patiently bides his time, and does not attempt to raise his feeble arm. The כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ being connected with a clause which gives an additional reason, has, as frequently, the meaning of *moreover*. כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ is a hendiadys, and is well translated by the Sept., καιρόν ἡμετέρας, *time of judgment*. For this figure, see vii. 25. The rendering of the Vulgate (TEMPUS ET RESPONSEM, *time and answers*), and of Hodgson ("the right time and use of judgment"), are both contrary to the text and context. Ibn Ezra rightly remarks (עַל־וַיִּשְׁמַע־בְּרַק־עַל־וַיִּשְׁמַע־שְׁמַעוֹ) that this clause must be connected with the following verse.

6. For there is a time, &c. The time of judgment is sure to come as soon as the subjects find their sufferings intolerable; revolt, and heavy retribution for every evil which the tyrant has perpetrated, will then be the result of his lawless and outrageous conduct. For כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ, see iii. 1. Of course כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ is a hendiadys, as in the preceding verse. We should have deemed it superfluous to make this remark had not the Septuagint, which has rightly rendered it so there, most inconsistently translated it here καιρός και ἡμετέρας, *time and judgment*; the Vulgate, too, has rendered it differently (*tempus et opportunitas*). כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ, in the second clause, is rightly rendered by the Chaldee (כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ) and Rashi (כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ) as a particle of *time*, in which sense it is frequently used

(comp. כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ לֹא־מֵלֵךְ, when they have a case they come to me, Exod. xviii. 16; Ps. xxxii. 3; Gesenius, § 155, l, c, b; Ewald, § 337, c). כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ is taken as—1. *The wickedness of a man is great upon him*, i. e., when the measure of his iniquity is full, regarding כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ as the evil which a man commits, כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ as *great, sufficient, full*, and כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ as referring to the sinner (so the Chaldee, Rashi, Rashbam); 2. *The evil of man is heavy upon him*, i. e., the evil which is inflicted upon man by the tyrant becomes intolerable; or, 3. *The evil of man* (i. e., of the tyrant) *is heavy upon him* (i. e., upon the oppressed). As the first view is precluded by the phrase כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ, which describes the weight of oppression upon the sufferers, and the second leaves no natural subject to the predicate in the following verse, we must adopt the third interpretation. כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ is not the king exclusively, but refers to oppressors generally, including the tyrannical monarch. This generic term is evidently chosen because a despotic sovereign necessarily has a host of lawless and debased officials. The rendering of the Septuagint and Theodotion (ἐν τῇ γνώσει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλῇ ἐν αὐτῷ, *for the knowledge of man is great upon him*, taking כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ for כִּי־בְּכֹכֶּךָ), and the Vulgate (*et multa hominis afflictio*), which has evidently given rise to the rendering of Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible ("for everything will have opportunity and judgment, and this is the thing that maketh man full of carefulness and sorrow"), and the Auth. Version ("because to every purpose there is a time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him"), and is explained by Bishops Reynolds and Patrick "because to every purpose or enterprise there is a proper season, and peculiar manner of acting; upon which narrow points

that is done under the sun. There is a time when a man
10 ruleth over men to their injury; and thus I have seen wicked

29; Levit. x. 9-11; 1 Sam. ii. 28; Esth. ix. 6. 12; *infra*, ix. 1. 11; Gesen. § 131, 4; Ewald, § 351, c).

There is a time when, &c. Coheleth, however, has also seen instances where retributive justice is wanting; man is sometimes permitted all his life long to tyrannise over and crush his fellow-men with impunity. *אָז, a time = sometimes (vide infra, ix. 8)*, is well rendered by the Vulg. *interdum*; Luther, *zu Zeiten*; *אָז*, as usually, is implied; the Septuagint (*τὰ ὅρα, all things*) exchanges it for *καὶ*, the sign of the accusative, and supplies *ἐν* after it from the first part of this verse. The pronoun *אֲנִי* is referred by Symmachus (*ἐς κακὸν αὐτοῦ*), the Vulgate (*in malum suum*), Rashi, Rashbam, Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, Le Clerc, Grotius, Hodgson, Herzfeld, Philippon, Stuart, &c., to the first *אָז*, the ruler's own heart; i. e., the despot by his tyrannic sway ultimately brings misery upon himself; whilst the Septuagint (*τοῦ κακῶσαι αὐτὸν*), the Syriac, the Chaldee, Ibn Ezra, Knobel, Ewald, De Wette, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Elster, Vaihinger, &c., refer it to the second *אָז*, i. e., man rules over his fellow-men to their misfortune and ruin. Against the first explanation, however, is to be urged that—1. It does not harmonise with the following verse, where the wicked is said sometimes to escape with impunity; 2. *אָז* by itself does not mean to tyrannise, but simply to rule in a lawful sense; 3. Chap. v. 12, to which Philippon appeals for support, is against this interpretation; and, 4. It takes away the pronoun from its immediate antecedents, and is obliged to refer it to the more remote subject.

10. *And thus I have seen*, &c. He not only saw tyrants succeed in practising their tyranny the whole of their life without being visited by retributive justice, but that these wicked

ones are perpetuated by their children when they die; whilst the righteous depart this life, and, leaving no issue, are totally forgotten in the city. The difficulty which commentators have experienced in the interpretation of this verse, has been greatly increased by the arbitrary and senseless renderings of the Ancient Version. Thus the Septuagint has *καὶ τότε ἰδὼν ἀνθρώπους εἰς τάφους εἰσαχθέντας, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἁγίου, καὶ ἐπορεύσαντες καὶ ἐπαύσαντες ἐν τῇ πόλει, ὅτι οὕτως ἐποίησαν, and I saw the wicked brought to the graves and from the holy place, and they departed and they were praised in the city, because they had acted in this manner*, altering *אָז* into *אָז*, *אֲנִי* into *אֲנִי*, *אֲנִי* into *אֲנִי*, and *אֲנִי* into *אֲנִי*. The last alteration, as will be seen below from Rashi's remark, is based upon the Hagadic explanation of this verse. The Vulgate has *VIDI IMPIOS SEPULTOS, QUI ETIAM, CUM ADHUC VIVERENT, IN LOCO SANCTO ERANT, ET LAUDABANTUR IN CIVITATE QUASI JUSTORUM OPERUM, I saw the wicked buried, who, while they lived, were in holy places, and were praised in the city as if men of just works*, dropping the word *אֲנִי*, inserting *אֲנִי*, changing *אֲנִי* into *אֲנִי*, and, like the Septuagint, *אֲנִי* into *אֲנִי*. Passing over these arbitrary alterations of the text, we come to St. Jerome, who renders it *ET TUNC VIDI IMPIOS SEPULTOS, ET VENERUNT, ET DE LOCO SANCTO EGRESSI SUNT, ET LAUDATI SUNT IN CIVITATE QUIA SIO FECERUNT, and then I saw the wicked buried, and they came and went forth from the holy place; and they were praised in the city because they had done so*, which he explains, "I have seen the wicked buried in such a manner, and such an opinion was entertained about them, that they were esteemed holy on the earth," thus taking *אֲנִי* and *אֲנִי* in an impersonal sense. Hence the explanation of Rambach and Gill, "Multi-

men buried and come again, and those who did right depart

tudes came to attend the funeral of such rich and mighty men, and walked after or followed the corpse (*אֲנִי*); and even the priests and Levites from the Temple made a part of the funeral procession (*אֲנִי*), and walked in great solemnity from thence to the place of interment, which was usually without the city; all their evil deeds were forgotten (*אֲנִי*), their acts of oppression and injustice, as if this had never been done by them." But, 1. It is most arbitrary to detach the verbs from their immediate antecedents, and make them refer to subjects not at all mentioned in the context; and, 2. The simple expressions *אֲנִי* and *אֲנִי* can never be forced to mean to come to a funeral procession, to walk after the corpse. The importance of St. Jerome's version consists in proving that the present Hebrew text is the same which he used; a fact which is also corroborated by the Syriac

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and when they went away from it they were praised in their city because they had done so; or, but they were forgotten in the city where they had acted so;" which he explains *אֲנִי* רשעים קברים שהיו ראויין להספן בעשר שהיו נבונים בין שאר אומות שנאמר עליהם זה העם לא היה ושלמו בביתו של הק' בזה שהוא מקום קדוש ונזכרת משם אל ארצם היו משתבחים בעצמם אשר כך וכך עשו בביתו של מקום אל הקר' ושחכחו אלא ושחכחו כי רשעו וזל' ולענין השכחה כך נדרש באגדה וסופו שישתכח שמם החרם מן העיר עצמה אשר כן עשו בה שנאמר וקבצו אח כל הגוים אל עמך יהושפט במקום שיציאו לפניו יספר מהם וכן הוא אומר ה' בעיר "I saw the wicked buried," i. e., who deserved to be hidden in the ground, for they were despised among other nations, just as it is said of them, "this people does not deserve to be a people" (Isa. xxiii. 13); and yet they ruled in the house of the Lord (for this is the meaning of Hebrew text is the same which he used; a fact which is also corroborated by the Syriac

Version, *ܐܬܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܝܢ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ*

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from the place of the holy, and be forgotten in the city.

is to be urged — 1. That קָבְרִים does not mean *who deserve to be buried*, but always describes those *who are actually buried*. 2. It violently construes נָבֵא וְהָלַכְו as an expression of the *exercise of office*, in which sense it is never used. Preston's appeal to 1 Sam. xxix. 6 is nugatory, for there and everywhere else the established phrase נָבֵא וְהָלַכְו is used, which is quite different from the words in question. 3. Had the sacred writer intended to convey by these words the idea of *bearing office*, he would undoubtedly have written וְהָלַכְו, and not have separated them by the insertion of קָבְרִים, producing thereby so unnatural a construction. 4. The parallelism קָבְרִים וְהָלַכְו and קָבְרִים וְהָלַכְו shews that they are two distinct and antithetical clauses. The proper explanation, as frequently, is given by Ibn Ezra, who says, רִאיוֹת רַשָּׁעִים שֶׁשָּׁלְשׁוּ בָאָרֶץ וְהָיוּ לָהֶם מָחוּ בְּלֹא יִסְרִיף קְבוּרָם בְּקִבְרֵם כַּעֲשֵׂן כִּי אֵין הַצְּבֹתָה לְמוֹתָם וְנָבֵא לְעוֹלָם שֶׁנִּהְיָ וְהָעֵינָן שִׁיבָיוּ בְּנִיהָם וְיַעֲמִדוּ בְּמָקוֹמָם וְיַעֲמִידוּ וְזָכָר וְאִשׁוּר כְּסֻקּוֹם קִדְשׁ יְהוֹנָן וְהָעֵינָן כִּי הַקְּדוּשִׁים שִׁימוּהוּ בְּלֹא בֶן וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ בְּצִיר שְׂדֵהוּ שֶׁמֶה וְהֵם אִשְׁרֵי עֲשָׂו כִּן הָאִמָּה כְּכֹן בְּנֹה לְעֹשֶׂהוּ דוּבִירָה, *I saw the wicked who rule over their fellow-men, and tyrannise over them, die without anguish; "they are buried in their graves" is like "there are no pains in their death"* (Ps. lxxiii. 4), *and they came into the world a second time, i. e., their children succeed to their places and perpetuate them; whilst those who departed from the holy place, that is, the holy ones, die without issue, and are forgotten in the city where they were, and these are they who executed justice* (נָבֵא = אִמָּה), taking נָבֵא and וְהָלַכְו in the legitimate sense of *coming into the world and departing from it* (vide supra, i. 4), and נָבֵא with Symmachus (ἀς δικαιοπραγίας), and the Vulgate for *right, well*; so also Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, &c. (comp. Exod. x. 29; Numb. xxviii. 7; 2 Kings vii. 9). For the indiscriminate use of the Piel וְהָלַכְו, and the Kal וְהָלַכְו, see iii. 5; and for

the passive signification of the Hithpael וְהָלַכְו, comp. Judg. xx. 15. 17; Gesen. § 64, d; Ewald, § 124, c. Luther's version — und da sahe ich Gottlose, die begraben waren, die gegangen waren, und gewandelt hatten in heiliger Stätte, und waren vergessen in der Stadt, daß sie so gethan hatten, *and then I saw the godless that were buried, who had gone and had walked in holy places, and were forgotten in the city*, which he explains, sie waren in der heiligen Städte, daß ist, sie regierten in Gottes Volk, Da sahe ich Gottlose die begraben waren, daß ist, ich sahe daß die Tyrannen verstorben waren, und daß ein frommer Fürst an die Stadt kam, als nach Saul, David, also vergessen die Leute bald frommer treuer Regenten, *"they were in the places of the holy," i. e., they ruled the people of God. "Then I saw the godless who were buried," i. e., I saw that the tyrants were dead, and that a pious prince came to the city; and as, after Saul, David was forgotten, so the people soon forgot pious and faithful rulers*, which has given rise to Coverdale's translation, and to the marginal notes in the Bishops' Bible, "for I have often seen the ungodly brought to their graves, and yet they have returned into the city again" (that is, the ungodly hath been praised after their burial), "from the place of holy men, which in the city were grown out of memory" (that is, the holy men, after their burial, grew out of memory), "as were those also that lived well," — is most arbitrary, and irreconcilable with the text. That which is of importance in these versions is the fact that they distinguish two classes of men in this verse, the righteous and the wicked. The Geneva Bible alone has faithfully followed Ibn Ezra's explanation, "And likewise I saw the wicked buried, and they returned" (Marg. Gloss, that is, others as wicked as they); and they that came from the holy place" (Marg. Gloss, they that

11 also this is vanity. Because sentence is not forthwith executed for evil work, the heart of the sons of men is full

feared God, and worshipped him according as he had appointed) "were yet forgotten in the city where they had done right;" whilst the Authorised Version ("and so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had done so"), following Rashi, is guilty of the violent proceedings with the text mentioned above in the analysis of this Rabbi's interpretation. The renderings of Desvieux ("nay, then I saw wicked men buried. Though they came even from the place of prostitution, they shall go and be praised in the city where they have done so"), and Hodgson ("for hereby have I seen wicked men brought to their graves; yea, forth have they been led, from the seat of royalty conducted, and consigned to death in that city where so they had acted"), are an additional evidence that learned men may be ignorant of the laws of exegesis. Knobel, Ewald, Herzfeld, De Wette, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Elster, Philippson, Vaihinger, &c., who adopt Ibn Ezra's interpretation without mentioning it, have successively marred it by their attempts to improve upon it. Thus Knobel and De Wette (und alsdann sah ich Freveler bestattet werden; und es kamen an und vom heiligen Orte gingen hinweg und wurden vergessen in der Stadt, welche rechtsgewandelt hatten), though rightly taking נָבֵא and וְהָלַכְו to denote *being born and dying*, totally destroy the antithesis, by referring both to וְהָלַכְו, *those who acted uprightly*; Ewald, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Elster, Philippson, and Vaihinger do the same thing by a more violent process, inasmuch as they take נָבֵא as an ellipsis for וְהָלַכְו, *they entered into peace*, as in Isa. lvii. 2, or for וְהָלַכְו, *they entered their graves*, and וְהָלַכְו, the Piel, to be here used for the Hiphil וְהָלַכְו, *they drove away*; Herzfeld,

who does not join in this arbitrary rendering of וְהָלַכְו, explains it by *emigrating*; whilst Hitzig alters it into וְהָלַכְו, *the perished*. According to Fürst (Concordance, s. v., וְהָלַכְו, ii.), this verse ought to be rendered, "and whilst I saw the wicked peacefully buried, and go [to their fathers] and depart from the place of the holy, yet were those found (i. e., remembered) in the city who acted uprightly," taking וְהָלַכְו to denote *to find, to exist, to be found*, which, as will be seen from Ibn Ezra's remark (וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ), has been proposed and rejected long ago. The many ellipses, however, which this explanation presupposes, and the forced meaning it assigns to the several expressions, will, we believe, prevent its having many followers. Stuart's version, "and I saw the wicked buried, for they had departed, even from a holy place did they go away; and then they were forgotten in the city where they had so done," taking נָבֵא as pluperfect, and the ו before it as standing in a kind of apodosis, is simply preposterous; for to say *the wicked were buried, for they had departed*, is nonsense; since they could not be buried without dying first. Besides, Stuart makes the verbs נָבֵא and וְהָלַכְו, which denote *two opposite things*, express the *same idea*, and destroys the antithesis of the hemistiches.

11. *Because sentence, &c.* This melancholy absence of retributive justice induces many fearlessly to commit sin, inasmuch as they have no apprehension of punishment (comp. Ps. cxxv. 3). The heart, being the seat of reason and feelings (vide supra, i. 13), is represented as becoming *replete* with thoughts which tend to and alternately ripen in the perpetuation of evil (comp. infra, ix. 3; Esth. vii. 5, and see the similar expression in Acts v. 3). וְהָלַכְו, *because*, is used instead of וְהָלַכְו.

12 in them to do evil, because a sinner doeth evil a hundred

(comp. vi. 12). *אין* by no means necessitates the alteration of *נִפְּחָה* the *preterite Niph.*, third per. masc., into *נִפְּחָה*, the *participle fem.*; for, though it is true that this negative particle is generally construed with the participle, yet we also assuredly find it joined with a *finite verb* (comp. *אֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ יִכָּל אֶתְּךָ*, the *bush was not consumed*, Exod. iii. 2; *אֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ יִכָּל אֶתְּךָ*, the *king cannot do anything against you*, Jer. xxxviii. 5; Job xxxv. 15; Gesen. Lex., s. v.) This construction is moreover corroborated by the fact that *פָּחַק* is masculine, as is evident from *וְנִפְּחָה פָּחַק*, Esth. i. 20, and can therefore only agree with *נִפְּחָה*, third per. masc., but not with the alteration of it into *נִפְּחָה*, the *fem. part.* sentence, is a later Hebrew word; it only occurs once more in Hebrew (Esth. i. 20), and may either be derived from *פָּחַק* in Aramaean, *פָּחַק* = *פָּחַק* = *פָּחַק*, to announce, to pronounce, to pronounce sentence, or it may be kindred with the Aramaean *פָּחַק*, to adjudicate, to decide, with the termination *פָּחַק* like *פָּחַק*, *loudly*, *locust*. Both the pause-accent upon it, and the *Quametz* under the *א*, shew that it is the *absolute form*; *כִּי־נִפְּחָה הָרָעָה* must therefore be taken as *accusative absol.* (compare Job i. 5; Ps. cxvii. 4, cxliv. 12; Gesen. § 118, 3; Ewald, § 300, c). The Septuagint (*οτι ουκ εστις ποταμος ταχυ, because there is no contradiction made from them who do evil quickly*), is exceedingly obscure, the translator evidently could not catch the meaning of the original, and, as is usual in such cases, determined to follow the very order of the words in the Hebrew, altering, however, *כִּי־נִפְּחָה*, *work*, into *כִּי־נִפְּחָה*, *from the doers of*, which the Vulgate, St. Jerome, the Syriac, &c., follow, and which is adopted by Spohn. The noun *קִרְחָה*, prop. *haste, speed*, is used adverbially for *קִרְחָה*, in *speed, forthwith, quickly* (comp. Numb. xvii. 11; Judg. ix. 54; Ps. xxxi. 3). Schmidt, Ewald, and

Hengstenberg, however, take it in the *adject. sense*, and, as both *substantives and adverbs* may be employed for adjectives (see Gesen. § 106, l; Ewald, § 296, d), translate it, *aber wo kein strafendes Urtheil ergeht, da nimmt die Bosheit schnell überhand, und das menschliche Herz füllt sich mit Planen, Böses zu stiften, but where no sentence is executed, there wickedness soon has the upper hand, and the human heart is filled with schemes to do evil* (Schmidt); *weil nicht geschieht der höchste Wille, kommt leicht der Bosheit That; darum ist das Herz der Menschenfinder in ihnen voll, Böses zu thun, because the supreme will is not executed, deeds of wickedness are soon done, therefore is the heart of men full to do evil* (Ewald); *weil nicht ergeht ein Ausspruch, eilet das Werk der Bosheit; darum wird das Herz, u. s. w., because a sentence is not executed, the work of wickedness hastens, therefore the heart, &c.* (Hengstenberg). But this division of the first clause into two sentences renders the words, "therefore the heart of men," &c., superfluous, since the second sentence is already the *apodosis*, and gives the result of the first, so that the third sentence is thereby made mere tautology. Besides, had this been the meaning of the sacred writer, he would undoubtedly have placed *עַל־כֵּן* before *קִרְחָה*. The Septuagint's rendering of *כִּי־לֵב יָגוֹ* by *επιληροφορηθη καρδια, the heart is fully persuaded*, does not exactly express its meaning; the Vulgate, *absque timore ullo filii hominum peccant mala, the children of men commit evils without any fear*, is still more languid and paraphrastic.

12. *Because a sinner, &c.* This clause resumes the statement made in the first clause of the preceding verse to render it more intense and emphatic. What is there summarily and simply characterised as a *delay* in the execution of the sentence upon the wicked, is here more particularly set forth in the striking

instance of a sinner who is both spared for many years to perpetrate crime, and is perpetuated in his wicked progeny. *אָפֶר* is therefore *causal*, and co-ordinate with *אָפֶר* in the foregoing verse, both having the same sense. That *אָפֶר* is *causal* and "expresses the same thing is moreover evident from the two phrases *אָפֶר וְהָיָה עִוְיוֹ* and *אָפֶר וְהָיָה עִוְיוֹ*, which are used to express the same thing, when the opposite character is described. Hence the Vulgate, Rashi, and Ibn Ezra's rendering of *אָפֶר* by *although*, which is followed by Luther, Coverdale, the Geneva Bible, the Auth. Version, Hodgson, Knobel, Herzfeld, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c., is contrary to the evenness of the construction. When we moreover add that *אָפֶר* never means *although*, that Gesenius (Lex. s. v. *אָפֶר* B. 4), and Ewald (Gram. § 362, b), who assign to it this concessive signification, have not adduced a single instance to justify this unnatural sense, the correctness and necessity of our rendering will be obvious. For *אָפֶר* with a *Segol* instead of *אָפֶר* with *Tzere*, see vii. 28. *אָפֶר* is not used *adverbially* for a hundred times (Gesen. Lex. s. v.; Ewald, § 269, d; Knobel, Herzfeld, Heiligstedt, Stuart, &c.), as there is no analogy for this usage (*vide supra*, vi. 3), but, as Rashi and Rashbam rightly remark (*אָפֶר וְהָיָה עִוְיוֹ*), is used *brachylogically*, and is the construct to an omitted word (comp. *וְהָיָה עִוְיוֹ*, *drunken with*—i.e. *וְהָיָה עִוְיוֹ*, the *wrath of the Eternal*, as is evident from ver. 17—and not with *wine*, Isa. li. 21). The expression to be supplied in the passage before us may either be *אָפֶר*, *years* (the Chaldee, Rashi, Rashbam, &c.), or *אָפֶר*, *times* (the Vulg., St. Jerome, Ibn Ezra, Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Auth. Ver., &c.); the former, however, is preferable, for it agrees better with the *delay* of the execution of retributive justice mentioned in the preceding verse,

which undoubtedly implies *waiting many years*, and which is not necessarily implied in the latter, inasmuch as one may commit a *hundred sins*, or a large number of them, in a *very short time*. That *אָפֶר*, part. Hiphil, is here used as a noun, and signifies *one who makes long, or perpetuates, a proloner, a perpetuator*, the wicked progeny which perpetuates his family, referring *אָפֶר וְהָיָה עִוְיוֹ*, the *wicked being buried, and appear again in their wicked descendants, who perpetuate them, are their perpetuators* (verse 10), is evident from the *אָפֶר* by which it is followed, thus making an essential difference between its signification here and in vii. 5, where it is used absolutely. All that is to be supplied here is the *substantive verb*, which, as is well known, is generally omitted. The literal translation of *אָפֶר וְהָיָה עִוְיוֹ*, therefore, is, *and there is a perpetuator to him; the passive rendering, however, and he is perpetuated, suits our idiom better*. The Septuagint's rendering of this clause, *ος ημαρτην επολησεν το ποταμιν απο τότε και απο μακροττης αυτων, whoso has sinned has done evil from that time and from the length of them, meaning, most probably, from the whole length of their existence, takes *אָפֶר* as a pronoun, changes *אָפֶר* into *אָפֶר*, and *אָפֶר* into *אָפֶר*, and yields no sense. Equally senseless is the translation of Symmachus, *αμαρταν γαρ ο κακούργος αποθανεν μακροθυμιας γνομης αυτου, for a sinner doing evil is dead, long-suffering being granted unto him*, which St. Jerome (Com. in loco) tells us was explained, "he who does evil and sins is dead in sin, although his days be prolonged to an old age," exchanging *אָפֶר* for its assonant *אָפֶר*, which is also done by Aquila and Theodotion, *κακούργος αποθανεν*. More literal is the rendering of St. Jerome, *quia peccator facit malum centies, et elongat ei Deus, ex hoc cognosco ego, quod erit bonum timentibus Deum, qui timent a facie ejus, because a sinner does evil a hundred times, and yet God lengthens his days, hence I know that**

years and is perpetuated. But I also knew that it shall be well with those who fear God, who truly fear before him; 13 and it shall not be well to the wicked, and, like a shadow, he shall not prolong his existence, because he doth not fear

it shall be well with those who fear God, who fear before his face, which he explains, "from the fact that God grants time for repentance to him who sins very much, this being meant by a hundred times, and does not immediately punish him for his wickedness, but waits that he may return; I understand how merciful and gracious God will be to them who fear him and tremble at his word." Hence the Bishops' Bible, "because an evil person offendeth an hundred times, and God deferreth, giving him long life, therefore am I sure that it shall go well with them that fear God," &c., and Desvieux, "because the sinner dieth, committing evil, even from the delays granted to him, thus I know that it shall be well," &c., who, however, alters *חַיָּתוֹ* into *חַיָּתוֹ*, and *חַיָּתוֹ* into *חַיָּתוֹ*, supplying *חַיָּתוֹ* after it. But this interpretation is both contrary to *חַיָּתוֹ*, which never means *from hence*, and to the evenness of the structure, as shewn above.

But I also knew, &c. But though Coheleth has seen (*חַיָּתוֹ*) the wicked triumph in their wickedness, which encourages men to practise evil (9-12, a), yet he was also *persuaded* (*חַיָּתוֹ*) that what he has asserted (5-8) is also true, viz., that there is an appointed time for righteous retribution, when it shall be well with those who truly fear God. For the adversative meaning of *חַיָּתוֹ*, *but*, see v. 6. The participle *חַיָּתוֹ* is placed before *חַיָּתוֹ* for the sake of emphasis. The repetition *חַיָּתוֹ חַיָּתוֹ*, characterising the God-fearing, corresponds to the repetition in the description of the godless. It is one of Coheleth's favourite modes of imparting emphasis to an allegation, and has its parallel in the New Testament (comp. *χίρας τίμα. τὰς ἡμέρας*;

χίρας, honour widows, who are truly widows, 1 Tim. v. 3). For the construction of *חַיָּתוֹ* with *חַיָּתוֹ*, see iii. 14.

13. *And it shall not, &c.* The discrepancy between the allegation in the preceding verse, that *wicked men do live long in spite of committing sin*, and the assertion here that *they shall not live long*, is a natural consequence of limiting the bar of judgment to this side of the grave; and this limitation, be it remembered, formed the starting-point, and is all along the basis of Coheleth's reasoning. With the promise of temporal rewards and punishments, a believing Old Testament philosopher could say (*חַיָּתוֹ*) "I know, I have been assured, that the righteous shall have a prosperous and long life, and the wicked a miserable and short existence;" but when he looked at the mysterious administration in the moral government of God, he also was constrained to exclaim (*חַיָּתוֹ*), "I see the very reverse often take place." Hence the discrepancy which weighed so deeply upon the minds of the chosen people, which led to such disastrous consequences, with which Coheleth deeply sympathises (*vide* p. 21, &c.), and which he ultimately reconciles. There is therefore no need to resort to the arbitrary rendering of the Vulgate, *ET BONUM NON SIT IMPIO, &c.*, and let it not be well with the wicked, &c., and the explanation of St Jerome, which make this verse an imprecation, in order to obviate the discrepancy. *חַיָּתוֹ חַיָּתוֹ חַיָּתוֹ*, *man shall not prolong his days like a shadow*, is merely a negative mode of expressing the well known phrase, *shall flee away like a shadow*, and is well rendered by Luther (*und wie ein Schatten nicht lange leben*). Spohn *und seine Lebenszeit wird wie ein*

14 before God. Still there is this vanity happening upon the earth, that there are righteous men who have wages like that of the wicked, and there are wicked who have wages like that of the righteous; I said that this, too, is vanity. 15 And I praised mirth, because there is nothing better for

Ḥāṭṭen), and others. The Sept., *ὅτι μακροὶ ἡμέρας ἢ ὡς ἑνὶ σκιά, he shall not prolong his days in, or under, a shadow*, which is followed by Desvieux; and the Chaldee paraphrase, *וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לוֹ כְּלִי חַיָּתוֹ*, *and there shall be no space for him in the world to come, and in this world the days of his life shall be cut off, they shall flee and pass away like a shadow*; the Vulgate, *NEC PROLONGENTUR DIES EJUS, SED QUASI UMBRA TRANSEANT, neither let his days be prolonged, but like a shadow let them pass away*; the Auth. Version, "neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow;" and Noyes, "he shall be like a shadow, and shall not prolong his days," dividing it into two distinct clauses; as well as Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible, "neither shall he prolong his days, but even as a shadow so shall he be," &c.; and the Geneva Bible, "neither shall he prolong his days; he shall be like a shadow, because," &c., connecting *חַיָּתוֹ*, contrary to the accents, with the closing part of the verse, which is followed by Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, &c., are inadmissible. For the comparison of the fleeting life of man with the transient shadow, see vi. 12. *חַיָּתוֹ*, *years*, is, as frequently, used for *years of life, lifetime, life, existence*. Here, too, *חַיָּתוֹ* is construed with *חַיָּתוֹ*, for which see iii. 14.

14. *Still there is this vanity, &c.* The conflict which has been carried on in verses 5-13, between Coheleth's knowledge or assurance (*חַיָּתוֹ*) of righteous retribution and his experience (*חַיָּתוֹ*) of its absence in this world, is now decided in favour of the latter, by an appeal to the melancholy fact that the very reverse of retributive justice is to be seen, since

the righteous endure the sufferings wherewith the wicked are threatened, whilst the wicked enjoy the earthly blessings promised to the righteous. *חַיָּתוֹ*, belonging to all numbers and genders, is construed with the *sing.* *חַיָּתוֹ*, *vanity*, and the *plur.* *חַיָּתוֹ*, *the righteous*. *חַיָּתוֹ*, upon the earth, used here, in verse 16, and in xi. 2, is the same as *חַיָּתוֹ חַיָּתוֹ*, *under the sun*, or *חַיָּתוֹ חַיָּתוֹ*, *under heaven* (comp. i. 3). *חַיָּתוֹ*, *work*, is also used metonymically for the effect, fruits, or wages of work generally, and the special name for these fruits must be determined by the nature of the employment in question (comp. Exod. xxxiii. 16; 1 Sam. xxv. 2; Isa. xxvi. 12; Jer. xlviii. 7). As the work here spoken of is the moral and immoral conduct of the righteous and the wicked (*חַיָּתוֹ*), the wages of course must be *reward, or happiness*, and *punishment, or misery, the destiny or fate* consequent upon such modes of living. The *חַיָּתוֹ* comparison in *חַיָּתוֹ*, shews that *חַיָּתוֹ* is implied before it, i.e., *חַיָּתוֹ חַיָּתוֹ* and *חַיָּתוֹ חַיָּתוֹ* (comp. *supra*, ii. 15). *חַיָּתוֹ* with *חַיָּתוֹ* or *חַיָּתוֹ*, as in Esth. ix. 26, is *to reach to any one, to come to, to have*.

15. *And I praised, &c.* Having shewn the utter inability of wealth to secure lasting happiness (vi. 1-12), and the impossibility of *prudence*, or a life regulated according to the teachings of *common sense*, to overrule the mysterious dealings of Providence, or to account for the melancholy fact that the fortunes of the righteous and the wicked are often reversed all the days of their lives (vii. 1.-viii. 14), Coheleth recurs to his repeated conclusion, that there is nothing left for man but to enjoy

man under the sun than to eat, and drink, and rejoice, and this will follow him in his work during the days of his life which God giveth him under the sun.

the things of this life. **וְאֵת** is not a conjunction introducing the clause **וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר אֵתְּנוּ**, as an explanatory periphrase of **אֲשֶׁר אֵתְּנוּ**, und ich preise die Freude, daß nämlich nichts gut sei für den Menschen, i. e., *I praise enjoyment that, namely, nothing is good for man but, &c.* (Herzfeld, Philippon, Hengstenberg, &c.), but is *causal*, as is evident from the connection of this verse with the preceding one, and from the fact that we have here the conclusion from the foregoing experiments. The singular **אֵתְּנוּ** may either refer to the eating, drinking, and rejoicing comprised in *one*, or, which is still better, to **אֵתְּנוּ**, *to incline, to join one's-self to any one, to attend, to follow*, is here construed with the *accusative*, like **אֵתְּנוּ** in Gen. xix. 19. **אֵתְּנוּ** is the same as **אֵתְּנוּ** in iii. 13; the **אֵתְּנוּ** expresses *proximity, nearness*; when man is engaged in or is at his work, this good

or enjoying spirit which he cultivates will accompany him to his sphere of labour. The phrase is well rendered by the Septuagint, *καὶ αὐτὸς συμπροσέταται αὐτῷ ἐν μέτρῳ αὐτοῦ*, Herzfeld and Philippon, und dies begleitet ihn bei seiner Mühe. The paraphrase of the Vulgate, *et hoc solum secum auferret de labore suo*, followed by Luther, und solches werde ihm von der Arbeit; Coverdale, and the Bishops' Bible, "for that shall be have of his labour;" the Geneva Bible, "for this is adjoined to his labour;" Desvieux, "for this shall borrow him from his labour," which he explains, "man is the property of labour; if ever that tyrannical owner parts with him, it is only by way of loan; pleasurable enjoyments may sometimes borrow him for a while, but he must be returned;" and Hodgson, "and these are to comfort him in his labour," are contrary to the meaning of **אֵתְּנוּ**.

SECTION IV.

CHAPTER VIII. 16—XII. 7.

Cohleth now recapitulates the investigations contained in the preceding sections, and gives us his final conclusion. Having found that it is impossible to fathom the work of God by wisdom (viii. 16, 17); that even the righteous and the wise are subject to this inscrutable Providence, just as the wicked (ix. 1, 2); that all must alike die and be forgotten (3-5), and that they have no more participation in what takes place here (6); that we are therefore to indulge in pleasures here while we can, since there is no hereafter (7-10); that success does not always attend the strong and the skilful (11, 12); and that wisdom, though decidedly advantageous in many respects, is often despised and counteracted by folly (13-x. 3); that we are to be patient under sufferings from rulers (4), who by virtue of their power frequently

pervert the order of things (5-7), since violent opposition may only tend to increase our sufferings (8-11); that the exercise of prudence in the affairs of life will be more advantageous than folly (12-20); that we are to be charitable, though the recipients of our benevolence appear ungrateful, since they may, after all, requite us (xi. 1, 2); that we are always to be at our work, and not be deterred by imaginary failures, since we know not which of our efforts may prove successful (3-6), and thus make life as agreeable as we can (7), for we must always bear in mind that this is the only scene of enjoyment; that the future is all vanity (8); but as this, too, did not satisfy the craving of the soul, Cohleth at last came to the conclusion, that *enjoyment of this life, together with belief in a future judgment, will secure real happiness for man* (9, 10), and that we are *therefore to live from our early youth in the fear of God and of a final judgment*, when all that is perplexing now shall be rectified (xii. 1-7).

16 As I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to see the work which is done under the sun, how that one doth not see

16. *As I gave my heart, &c.* To shew more strikingly the force of the final conclusion, submitted at the end of this section, Cohleth gives first a *résumé* of the investigations contained in the foregoing three sections. He tells us, that in the course of his enquiry he found it utterly impossible to fathom the work of God by wisdom. The expression **וְאֵת** marks the beginning of a new subject (comp. v. 3). For **וְאֵת** and **וְאֵת**, see i. 13; and for **וְאֵת**, *to know*, i. e., *to acquire wisdom*, see i. 16. **וְאֵת**, the *relative conjunction*, introduces the explanatory clause **וְאֵת** (comp. **וְאֵת**), depending upon **וְאֵת**, and is still **וְאֵת** (comp. **וְאֵת**), *and that he may reveal or disclose to thee the depths that they are double for thy wisdom, i. e., they doubly surpass thy wisdom*, Job xi. 6, where **וְאֵת** introduces **וְאֵת**, explanatory of **וְאֵת**, and is dependent upon **וְאֵת**, see also *ibid.* xxii. 12). This explanation, besides relieving this clause from the complicated position in which it is placed, by those who assign to **וְאֵת** a *causal* signification, makes it evident that the much disputed suffix in **וְאֵת**, which the Chal-

dee, Reynolds, &c., refer to Solomon, and Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Rosenmüller, De Wette, &c., to his heart, refers to man engrossed in this **וְאֵת** "work which is done upon the earth" (comp. ii. 23, v. 16, ix. 12). **וְאֵת**, with the *negative*, gives intensity to the statement, i. e., *not even* (comp. iv. 8). After what has been said in i. 8, upon the ascription of *hope* to the eye, the phrase *the eyes see sleep* will at once be intelligible (comp. also Gen. xxxi. 40; Ps. cxxxii. 4; Prov. vi. 4). The same phrase is also used in Latin, comp.

Somnum hercle ego hac nocte oculis non vidi meis.

"I faith, I have not seen sleep this night with my eyes."

TERENT. HEAUTONTIMUS, III. 1. 82.

By the figure *Zeugma*, the words **וְאֵת** **וְאֵת**, *he sees no sleep with his eyes*, which can with propriety be predicated only of **וְאֵת**, the nearer noun, refers also to **וְאֵת**, the more remote one. This figure of speech is of frequent occurrence in the Old and New Testament, as well as in profane writings (comp. **וְאֵת** **וְאֵת**, *the roaring of the lion, and the teeth of the young lion are*

2 neither love nor hatred, both are before them, both just as before all others; the same fate happeneth to the righteous and the wicked; to the good and pure, and to the impure; to him who sacrificeth and to him who doth not sacrifice; as is the good so is the sinner, he that sweareth as he who

refers to הָאֱלֹהִים, which is used *collectively* for הַצְדִּיקִים וְהַפְּשָׁעִים, *the righteous and the wise*; yet Dr. Gill explains it, "*yet all things are before him*; Elohim, the three divine Persons."

2. *Both just as before all others, &c.* This verse is intimately connected with the preceding one, being a continuation of the same sentiment, and ought not to have been separated from it. Both happiness and misery, which, as said at the end of the foregoing verse, indiscriminately await the righteous and the wicked, come to them just in the same arbitrary manner as to all other men; there is no difference in this respect between the good and the bad, the pious and the impious meet with the same fate. That הָאֱלֹהִים, which is simply a further explanation of הָאֱלֹהִים in the preceding verse, should have called forth such a diversity of opinions, must be ascribed to the confusion which reigns in the ancient versions on this clause. The Septuagint renders הָאֱלֹהִים by ματαιότης in τοῖς πᾶσι, *vanity in all*, omitting הָאֱלֹהִים, and alters הָאֱלֹהִים into הָאֱלֹהִים. Symmachus, who also takes הָאֱלֹהִים for הָאֱלֹהִים, connects it with הָאֱלֹהִים at the end of the foregoing verse, viz., τὰ πάντα ἀμνηστῶν αὐτοῦ ἀθάνατα, *all before him is uncertain*; so also the Vulgate, SED OMNIA IN FUTURUM SERVANTUR INCERTA, *but all things are kept uncertain for the future*. The Syriac כִּי יִמְוָסֶסֶב וְסַחֲלָן כִּי אִבְרָ

כִּי אִבְרָ, *all before him is vanity, all as to all*, has both the correct reading of the text and this emendation, the latter has evidently been inserted into the text from a marginal gloss. Hitzig's explanation of this clause is

truly marvellous; he takes מִקֶּדֶם אֲדָם both as the *predicate* of הָאֱלֹהִים and the *subject* of הָאֱלֹהִים; the full construction, according to him, is הָאֱלֹהִים הָאֱלֹהִים מִקֶּדֶם אֲדָם, Alle sind gleichwie Alle trifft Ein Zufall. These arbitrary emendations and far-fetched expositions appear all the more monstrous when compared with Ibn Ezra's simple and natural explanation of this clause, הָאֱלֹהִים כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, *all or both things happen to them (i. e., to the righteous and wise) just as to every one else*; similarly Rashbam holds that הָאֱלֹהִים is the subject of the verb, *he who swears*, and the full construction is הָאֱלֹהִים מִקֶּדֶם אֲדָם, *both await them just as they await all others*. מִקֶּדֶם אֲדָם, *the same fate*, refers to the same indiscriminate fortunes spoken of in the preceding verse, which meet alike the righteous and the wicked, without any regard to merit or demerit. For מִקֶּדֶם, *fate*, and אֲדָם, *the same*, see ii. 14. טוב, *good*, is placed before הָאֱלֹהִים וְהַפְּשָׁעִים, to shew that the purity and impurity are not *Levitical* but *moral*. The Septuagint's insertion of κακῶν, *evil*, after it, thus making it a separate couplet, viz., καὶ ὁ καλὸς καὶ ὁ κακὸς, which is also done by the Vulgate and Syriac, and adopted by Desvieux, Spohn, &c., has no MS. authority, and would, if admitted, be a needless tautology, inasmuch as καλὸς and κακὸς are mentioned in the next couplet but one. καὶ — καὶ is used when two things are compared, as — so (comp. פְּחֻמָּה וְחֻמָּה, *as is the sin-offering, so is the trespass-offering*, Levit. vii. 7; Ewald,

3 feareth an oath. This is the greatest evil of all that is done under the sun, that there is the same fate for all, and that, although the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their hearts during their life, yet, after it, they 4 go to the dead; for who is excepted? To all the living there

§ 360). The כִּי comparison is omitted before הָאֱלֹהִים, and מִקֶּדֶם אֲדָם is used before הָאֱלֹהִים instead of כִּי, to give variety to the construction. The antithetic מִקֶּדֶם אֲדָם, *he who fears an oath*, shews beyond doubt that *careless swearing*, the habit of using an oath at every declaration made, is intended by מִקֶּדֶם אֲדָם, and not *perjury* (Vulgate, Rasbi, Rashbam), compare Matt. v. 34, and Talmud, Gittiu, 31, b, 35, a, where swearing generally is discouraged.

3. *This is the greatest, &c.* What is worst of all is, that this absence of all distinction between the righteous and the wicked, during the whole of man's life-time, is also visible in death; that those who had their hearts full of wickedness and folly all the days of their life, at the end of their journey enter into the realm of the dead, like the rest of mankind. The preposition כִּי in 3 gives to 4 the force of the superlative, making it stand forth prominently as evil in the midst (כִּי) of all other evils; none of all those by which it is surrounded can eclipse it, hence its superlative idea (comp. מִיֵּשֶׁב מְנַשֶּׁה, *my family is the weakest in Manasseh*, Judg. vi. 15; Song of Songs i. 8; Lam. i. 1; Amos iii. 16; Ewald, § 313, c. The Vulgate has therefore rightly rendered it, PESSIMUM INTER OMNIA, *the worst of all things*, and Ibn Ezra מְשֻׁמָּה מִכָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, *among all things done under the sun nothing is more difficult than this, &c.*; so also Knobel, Herzfeld, Vaihinger, &c. That מִקֶּדֶם אֲדָם refers to death, to which all men, good and bad, are alike subject, as in ii. 14, iii. 19, is evident from its explicative וְאַחֲרָיו at the end of the verse. נִים

is still dependent upon כִּי, which must be mentally supplied before it, i. e., *and that even if, although*, they have led such a wicked life, there is no distinction made between them and the righteous (מִקֶּדֶם אֲדָם), the same fate is for all alike. The כִּי before וְאַחֲרָיו must therefore be regarded as introducing the *apodosis*, i. e., being the *protasis* (vide supra, viii. 17). The suffix in וְאַחֲרָיו refers to הַחַיִּים, *life*, which, like many other abstract nouns, is expressed by the plural (comp. Gesen. § 108, 2, a; Ewald, § 179, a). For כִּי לֵב, see viii. 11. The omission of וְאַחֲרָיו, *they go, before וְאַחֲרָיו, to the dead*, which imparts great energy to the diction in the original, must be supplied in the translation, as our idiom does not admit of such an ellipsis. The traditional explanation of this clause, taking וְאַחֲרָיו, *to the dead*, for *hell*, which is given in the Midrash, the Chaldee, Rasbi, &c., and which, as usual, is followed by the Vulgate (ET POST HEC AD INFEROS DEDUCENTUR, *and afterwards they shall be brought down to hell*), Gill, &c., requires no refutation.

4. *For who is excepted?* In corroboration of the mournful fact with which the preceding verse concluded, viz., that all men, good and bad, die alike, Coheleth appeals to our own experience, asking us whether any, no matter what their conduct, can be adduced as being exempted from this fate common to all men. Some difference shewn in this awful event between the righteous and the wicked would indeed be a slight satisfaction, since the living, however low and contemptible their condition, possessing some rays of hope, are preferable to the dead, however great

and honoured. To enter into the full force of the adage with which Coheleth illustrates the advantage of life over death, we must advert to the respective positions which the dog and the lion occupied in the estimation of the Hebrews. Now that we hear it affirmed "that, with the exception of woman, there is nothing on earth so agreeable, or so necessary to the comfort of man, as the dog" (Jesse's Anecdotes of Dogs, Introd., Bohn's ed.); when we see this animal, a most faithful and cheering companion to the beggar in his solitude, and the monarch in his exile; the first to defend us in danger, the last to desert us in distress; tenderly guarding the infant, and gently guiding the blind; when we read some of the sweetest lines composed to celebrate his noble deeds and generous feelings, we could hardly understand the contemptible allusion to the dog, both here and elsewhere in the Scriptures, did we not bear in mind the Jewish treatment of the dog. The Jews excluded dogs from all familiarity, and entirely banished them from their premises. These animals without owners had therefore to take up their abode in some desolate part of the town, had to subsist on offal, carrion, and human corpses (Exod. xxii. 31; 1 Kings xiv. 11, xvi. 4, xxi. 19. 23; 2 Kings ix. 36; Ps. lix. 6). From this disgusting way of subsistence, and their repulsive habit alluded to in Prov. xxvi. 11, and 2 Pet. ii. 22, dogs were looked upon as the most unclean, debased, and despicable creatures; and the very term dog became a metaphor for uncleanness, debasement, and despicableness (1 Sam. xvii. 43, xxiv. 14; 2 Sam. ix. 8, xvi. 9; 2 Kings viii. 13; Sirach xiii. 22; Matt. vii. 6, xv. 26; Rev. xxii. 15). Hence the Jews called the Gentiles *dogs*, because of their abasement and abominations, and hence our Lord, when speaking of Jews and Gentiles, calls the former children and the latter *dogs* (Matt. xv. 26), and Mohammedans to this day call

Christians dogs by way of contempt. The lion, on the contrary, was regarded as the *king* of animals, in consequence of his strength and invincible courage, and became the symbol of *might* and *majesty*. The royal tribe of Israel is compared to a lion (Gen. xlix. 9); God, in his power and majesty, is frequently spoken of as a lion (Job x. 16; Isa. xxxviii. 13; Lam. iii. 10; Hos. xiii. 7); and the Messiah is distinguished as "the lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. v. 5). Mohammed called his uncle Homza, *the lion of God* (Gesen. Comment. on Isaiah xxix. 1). Hence the force of the passage. Notwithstanding the debased condition of the one, and the majestic position of the other, a despicable living dog is preferable to an exalted but dead lion. The same proverb exists in Arabic (comp. Golii Adag. Cent. ii. 3). *וְ* is *causal*, assigning a reason for the previous allegation, and is therefore wrongly translated *surely, truly*, in the Geneva Bible, by Stuart, &c. *וְ*, as usually, is the interrogative *who*, with the substantive verb implied, hence *וְיִחְיֶה כִּי* means *who is it that*. *יִחְיֶה* (the Pual of *יָחַד*, to prove, to approve, to select, to choose) is *selected, excepted, exempted*; the interrogation is used for an emphatic denial, and is therefore well rendered by Symmachus *τίς γὰρ αἰς αἰ διατελεῖ ζῶν*; *who shall always continue to live!* and better still by the Vulgate, *NEMO EST QUI SEMPER VIVAT, ET QUI HUIUS REI HABEAT FIDUCIAM, there is no one who lives for ever, or hopes for it*—making, however, of *וְיִחְיֶה כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה לְעוֹלָם* in the Hebrew *וְיִחְיֶה כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה לְעוֹלָם*—Rambach, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Knobel, De Wette, Gesenius, Noyes, Philippon, Vaihinger, Fürst, &c. Others, however, who adhere to this construction, and deduce the same sense from this clause, unnecessarily change the vowel-points of the Pual *יִחְיֶה* either for *יָחַד* the Kal (Elster, &c.), or *יָחַד* the Niphal (Hengstenberg, &c.) The *Keri* *יִחְיֶה*, which is adopted by the Septuagint, Symmachus, the Syriac,

5 is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything; and there is no more any advantage to them, for

the Chaldee, Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, Desvieux, Hodgson, Ewald, Hitzig, Stuart, &c., and which is to be found in ten of Kennicott's MSS., and thirteen of De Rossi's, connects it with the following part of the verse, *i. e.*, *for to him who is joined to all the living there is hope*. But—1. This construction severs the manifest connection of this verse with the preceding one; 2. It renders *וְ* before *יִחְיֶה* superfluous and intolerable, so much so, that it even called forth the remark from Stuart, that "the phrase has no parallel in the Hebrew," and yet, strange to say, he adopts it; and 3. The *Keri* evidently proceeds from an intentional transposition of the letters *ו* and *י*, which was one of the Hagadiah rules of exegesis, thereby to obtain the supposed seventy different meanings of the text (*vide supra*, p. 31). Luther (denn bei allen Lebendigen ist, daß man wünscht, nehmlich Hoffnung, for to all the living there is that which is desired, namely, hope), defies the Hebrew text. Equally arbitrary is the strange version of Coverdale, "and why? as long as a man liveth he is careless; for a quick dog (say they) is better than a dead lion," which is adopted in the Bishops' Bible, and has given rise to Broughton's translation, "for all that be yet accompanied unto all the living (say the men of an evil heart) they have assurance. For it is better with the dog alive than with the lion that is dead." According to the explanation we defend, the expression *וְ* before *יִחְיֶה* is not only tolerable but necessary, inasmuch as by *יִחְיֶה*, *all the living*, the sacred writer means *irrational* as well as *rational* life, as is evident from the illustration which he introduces of the *dog* and the *lion*. There is no necessity for appealing to the doubtful usage of the *ו*, to intro-

duce the *subject*, and to regard *יִחְיֶה* as the *nominative* (Hitzig), nor for taking it in the sense of *QUOD ATTINET AD, in respect to, as to* (Knobel, Preston, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Hengstenberg, &c.), which it undoubtedly has elsewhere (comp. Ewald, § 310, a), but which would produce a harsh construction here, nor for assigning to it the signification *for*, *even* (Ewald, Gramm. § 310, b), which has not a single parallel, but is to be taken in its usual sense as standing before the *dative* (so Symmachus, *καὶ ζῶντι βέλτιον ἢ νεκρῷ τίθησθαι*, the Geneva Bible, Rashi, Desvieux, Rosenmüller, Herzfeld, &c.), and is omitted before *יִחְיֶה*, not from an inadvertency of the transcriber (Desvieux, p. 332), but because of *וְ*, which precedes it, so that *יִחְיֶה* stands for *יִחְיֶה* (comp. ii. 7, vi. 5, vii. 2, xii. 12). However, it is better with the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Syriac, the Chaldee, Desvieux, &c., to translate *as if it were* in the *nominative*, since it conveys more forcibly the sense of the original.

5. *For the living know, &c.* The ray of hope dimly shining in the breast of the living, mentioned in the foregoing verse to shew the advantage of life over death, is here concentrated in the consciousness of death which the living possess, and which, as the antithesis shews, has its concomitant faculties, enabling the living to enjoy some earthly pleasures when they do come, though they be rare and arbitrary. The dead, however, are entirely unconscious, and can therefore share no more in the pleasures of this earth, since the faculties capable of enjoyment are destroyed in them. *וְ*, *for, because*, assigns a reason for the assertion in the foregoing verse, that *there is hope to all the living*, which we are here told consists in their consciousness, together with the *feelings and passions* belong-

sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor yet bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to the learned; that the time of misfortune meeteth all, and that man doth not even know his time; like fish which are taken in a destructive net, and like sparrows which are caught in a snare, like these are the sons of men ensnared in the time of misfortune, when it suddenly cometh upon them.

tion with regard to the *wise and intelligent*. Like piety, wisdom cannot counteract that arbitrary state of things according to which the very reverse of what we expect from the means employed takes place. For the formula *שָׁבַרְתִּי וַיָּבֵרָה*, *I turned and I saw*, i. e., *I saw again*, marking the transition to the other part of the subject, see iv. 1, where also *שָׁבַר*, as here, is used *adverbially*; and for *וַיָּבֵרָה* the *infinitive absolute*, instead of *וַיָּבֵרָה*, the *finite verb*. see viii. 9. That *רָצָה*, *race*, and *מִלְחָמָה*, *battle*, mean a *successful issue* in these engagements is evident from the context. The climactic *וְכֵן* marks gradation in the scale of importance, and shews that the *principal* design of the verse is to set forth the *powerlessness of wisdom*, *swiftness* and *strength* being introduced as mere stepping stones whereby to ascend to the highest capacities of man. *וְכֵן* before the last clause, like the one preceding it, is dependent upon *וַיָּבֵרָה*, and must therefore be translated *that*, and not *for*. *וְכֵן*, which is substituted in the following verse for *וְכֵן* here, shews that *וְכֵן*, *chance*, *fortune*, denotes *misfortune*, and that the *וְכֵן* before it indicates that it serves to define *וְכֵן*, constituting the figure *hendiadys*, *vide supra*, vii. 25. This simple explanation relieves the sentence from the awkward and meaningless rendering that "time meets all," and also accounts for the verb *וְכֵן*, *it happens*, being in the *singular*.

12 *And that man*, &c. Of how little value wisdom is in this matter is evident from the humiliating fact, that it is not only utterly unable to

exempt the wise from the day of calamity, but that it does not even enable him to *foresee it*; and thus, with the rest of mankind, the wise are as suddenly, as ignorantly, and as inextricably ensnared by misfortunes as the simple fish or bird. *וְכֵן* is still a *conjunction*, depending upon *וַיָּבֵרָה*, so that *וְכֵן — וְכֵן — וְכֵן* is to be translated *that — that — and that* (*vide supra*, vi. 11, 12). *וְכֵן*, with the negative particle, is used with peculiar emphasis for *not even* (comp. iv. 8; viii. 16), i. e., the wise man is not only subject to the same fate as the fool, but *cannot even foresee it*. *וְכֵן*, when used after the description of a particular class of men, refers to *them especially*, see verse 1, and *infra*, x. 14). *וְכֵן*, *his time*, is not *time of death* (*NESCIT HOMO FINEM SUUM*, the Vulgate, Grotius, Nachtigal, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Hengstenberg, &c.), nor *seasons of prosperous and adverse fortunes* (Holden, &c.), nor *proper time for working* (Knobel, &c.), but *the time of misfortune*, which is determined by the last clause of this verse. *וְכֵן*, the *masculine*, refers both to the *masculine* *וְכֵן* and the *feminine* *וְכֵן*, giving preference to the *masculine* gender, as is generally the case in such instances. *וְכֵן* may either be regarded as a *verbal adjective*, formed from the future Hophal of *וְכֵן*, or may be taken as standing for *וְכֵן*, the *participle Pual* of *וְכֵן*, the preformative *וְכֵן* being omitted, and the absence of the *Dugesh forte* in the *וְכֵן* being compensated for by the lengthening of the preceding vowel (comp. Exod. iii. 2; Judg. xii. 8; 2 Kings ii. 10;

13 Even this wisdom have I seen, and it seemed great to me:
14 There was a little city, and few men in it; and a powerful king came against it, and besieged it, and built great towers

Gesen. § 52, 2, Rem. 6; Ewald, § 169, d). *וְכֵן* = *וְכֵן* is *feminine*, referring to *וְכֵן*, and still keeps up the figure of the snare which is made to fall over its victims.

13. *Even this wisdom have I seen*, &c. The assertion made in verse 11 about the inability of wisdom, and sub-ordinately also of physical prowess, is now illustrated by an example. Coheleth relates an anecdote to shew a display of wisdom which even to him, *the wisest of men*, appeared very great, yet it could not secure favour to the wise man. The best rendering of the involved *וְכֵן*, and the one most consonant with the context, is that of the Vulgate (*hanc quoque sub sole vidi sapientiam*), Rashbam (*וְכֵן*), Luther (*Ich habe auch diese Weisheit gesehen*), Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible ("this wisdom have I seen also"), the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, &c. The Septuagint (*καὶ οὗτοῦτο εὐδοκίᾳ εὐδοκίᾳ*, also in this I saw wisdom), making *וְכֵן* a double accusative to *וְכֵן*, which is followed by Spohn, Köster, Hengstenberg, &c., as well as the rendering of Herzfeld, &c. ("I have also seen this; there is wisdom," &c.), supplying the substantive verb before *וְכֵן*; of Knobel, De Wette, &c. (*auch dies nahm ich wahr: Weisheit unter der Sonne*, u. s. w., also this I saw, namely wisdom under the sun, &c.), and of Stuart, Elster, &c. ("I have also seen this, I have seen wisdom," &c.), repeating mentally the verb *וְכֵן* before *וְכֵן*, require harsh ellipses, and interrupt the manifest connection of this passage with verse 11. *וְכֵן*, to me, i. e., *appeared to me*, the substantive verb, as usual, is to be supplied, which must be rendered *is*, *appears*, or otherwise, according to the requirement of the connection (comp. Ewald, § 217, c).

14. *There was a little city*, &c.

The occasion upon which this extraordinary wisdom was displayed was when a small and defenceless city was attacked by a large and powerful army, which, in addition to its immense superiority in numbers, had the advantage of occupying the rising ground round the city, thus affording it capital ground for building bulwarks overlooking the walls into the very heart of the place. Desperate and hopeless indeed appears the state of the devoted inhabitants. The substantive verb *וְכֵן*, *there was*, must be supplied after *וְכֵן*, *a small city*. *וְכֵן*, *and few men within it*, is added to shew the very small number of defenders, which is not necessarily implied in the simple mentioning of a little city, for the inhabitants might have hired soldiers to assist them. *וְכֵן*, *a great king, a powerful king*, leading a large army (comp. Jer. xxvii. 7). The rendering of *וְכֵן* by *against it* does not convey the exact idea of the original, which means *over or above it*. Hence Ibn Ezra rightly remarks, that *וְכֵן* *the city was built on an incline, so that the enemy could build the bulwarks overlooking it, and higher than it*. *וְכֵן*, i. q., *וְכֵן*, not from *וְכֵן* (Ibn Ezra), which does not occur, but from *וְכֵן*, *to lie in wait, is siege work, intrenchments, a bulwark* (1 Chron. xi. 7, xii. 8, 16), here the idea of *tower* is more prominent, just as *וְכֵן* (Isa. xxiii. 13), and *וְכֵן* (2 Kings xxv. 1; Jer. lii. 4; Ezek. iv. 2), which also signify *tower*, are derived from *וְכֵן* and *וְכֵן*, *to look out*. The reading *וְכֵן*, which is to be found in two of De Rossi's MSS., and which is adopted by Döderlein, and Gesenius in his Thesaurus and Lexicon, has too little authority to support it, is unnecessary, and has manifestly arisen from mistaking the *וְכֵן* for *וְכֵן*. The addition of the Vulgate,

18 foolish ruler, and wisdom is better than instruments of war,
x. 1 yet one fool destroyeth much good; a dead fly maketh sweet

Armen verachtet, und werden seine Worte nicht gehört, (17) die Worte der Weisen, in Ruhe angehört, sind besser als, u. s. w. But this explanation — 1. Harshly and unwarrantably supplies טוֹבִים before מְחִיבִים; 2. It violates the idiomatic construction מְחִיבֵי, as is evident from vi. 6; and, 3. Is at variance with the scope of the passage, which is not to shew the value of wisdom, but, on the contrary, to set forth its utter inability to cope with an arbitrary Providence, and how entirely it is even under the subjection of folly, as will be seen in the next verse. Le Clerc, Desvoeux, &c., who render it "the words of the wise are more minded among men of quiet dispositions," &c., incur the additional censure of taking most arbitrarily and unnaturally the word מְחִיבֵי, the abstract for the concrete plural, in the sense of men of quiet dispositions; so also Bishop Reynolds, Durell, Hodgson, Spohn, Knobel, Herzfeld, &c., who render מְחִיבֵי by ought to be heard, or merit attention, besides the above-named objections, are guilty of taking the same word in two different senses. All these difficulties are avoided by identifying the obedience spoken of in this verse with the instance of obedience narrated in verse 15. דְּבָרֵי, the words of, is opposed to מְחִיבֵי, the vociferous command, and מְחִיבֵי, the wise, to מְחִיבֵי, a foolish ruler. The א prefixed to nouns gives them sometimes the force of adjectives (comp. מְחִיבֵי נְשִׂים, the Lord is among my supporters, i. e., is my supporter, Ps. liv. 5; מְחִיבֵי נְשִׂים, the Eternal is among my helpers, i. e., is my helper, ibid. cxviii. 7; Job xxiv. 13). Hence the Septuagint rightly translates מְחִיבֵי כִּי־לִי by ἐξουσιαστικῶν in ἀπορροιαῖς, those who rule in folly; so Geier, Patrick, Knobel, Noyes, Heiligstedt, &c. מְחִיבֵי qualifies מְחִיבֵי, and is the point of comparison.

18. And wisdom is better than, &c.

Cohleth, moreover, refers to the other point in which wisdom shewed itself very powerful in the anecdote which he related. Not only did this poor man's wise counsel inspire more confidence than the command of a martial chief, but his wisdom shewed itself superior to all the weapons of war and the bulwarks raised against the defenceless city. Yet all this does not enable the wise man to overrule the destiny common to all men, and render him more distinguished than the fool; on the contrary, his very wisdom is subject to folly, and a single fool may entirely destroy all the good which wisdom has effected. As the first part of this verse continues the concession, the concessive particle, or the simple conjunction, must be expressed in the translation to give the force of the original. מְחִיבֵי (from מְחִיבֵי, to miss, to err, in point of knowledge or virtue), one who is in error, intellectually or morally, a fool, a sinner. That the erring is here intellectual and not moral, is clearly indicated by the context. The Vulgate, ET QUI IN UNO PECCAVERIT MULTA BONA PERDET, and he who shall offend in one, shall lose many good things, alters מְחִיבֵי into מְחִיבֵי, and is at variance with the context. The reading מְחִיבֵי, which the Syriac and nine of Kennicott's MSS. have, and is adopted by Döderlein, Spohn, Schmidt, Mendelssohn, Friedländer, &c., is rightly rejected by Knobel, De Wette, Herzfeld, Hitzig, Elster, Vaihinger, &c., as incompatible with the context. How Preston could say that "the Rabbinical commentators are inclined to take it to be a noun abstract., signifying defect," when the Sept., the Chaldee, Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, &c., explain it by sinner, or fool, is most unaccountable.

1. A dead fly, &c. This verse illustrates and confirms the allegation in the immediately preceding

ointment stinkingly to ferment; a little folly is more mighty

clause, and ought not to have been interrupted by the separation of chapters. To shew more strikingly the subjection of wisdom to folly, Cohleth alludes to an every-day occurrence which has passed into a proverb. Just as the insignificant fetid fly has the power of corrupting a quantity of precious perfume by imparting unto it its offensive smell, so a little folly has often shewn itself more weighty and powerful than glorious wisdom. From the disagreeable effect which the presence of dead flies in precious mixtures produces in the sultry climate of the East, arose the Arabic proverb, "A fly is nothing, yet it produces loathsomeness." This will shew the force which the illustration here used has to an Oriental. The genitive being used to describe the operation as well as the quality of a noun, מְחִיבֵי קָוָה, flies of death may either mean death-working or deadly flies, according to the analogy of מְחִיבֵי קָוָה, instruments of death, i. e., deadly instruments (Ps. vii. 14, xviii. 5, cxvi. 3), and מְחִיבֵי קָוָה דְּמָוִת, deadly wounds (Rev. xiii. 3. 12), so the Septuagint, the Chaldee, Luther, Geier, Schmidt, Nachtigal, Dathe, Knobel, Herzfeld, Fürst (Lex. s. v. מְחִיבֵי), Vaihinger, &c.; or it may denote dead flies, according to the analogy of מְחִיבֵי קָוָה, a precious stone (Prov. xvii. 8), מְחִיבֵי קָוָה, a graceful ibex (ibid. v. 19), so Symmachus, the Vulg., the Syriac, St. Jerome, Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Auth. Ver., Desvoeux, Hodgson, Durell, Mendelssohn, Friedländer, De Wette, Ewald, Gesenius, Hitzig, Preston, Heiligstedt, Noyes, Stuart, Philippson, Elster, Hengstenberg, &c.; the latter is more compatible with the context, inasmuch as the simple settling down of poisonous flies upon perfume would not corrupt its odour, whereas dead flies corrupt it. As to the singular verb מְחִיבֵי following the plural noun מְחִיבֵי, Ibn Ezra rightly remarks that מְחִיבֵי

כל וכו' יבאיש במקומו כמו בנות צדקה על שור כל בה צדקה כל אחת ואחת במקומה ורחק האשה את שני האנשים והצטנה צטנה כל אחד ואחד במקומו ורחק הוקדו את הספרים ויטעמו קרא כל אחד ואחד לבדו distributively, referring to each fly separately, as is often the case (comp. מְחִיבֵי קָוָה, בְּנוֹת צִדְקָה, each branch separately spreads over the wall, Gen. xlix. 22; וְהָאִשָּׁה אֶת שְׁנֵי הָאָנָשִׁים וְהָצְטָנָה, and the woman took the two men and hid each of them, Josh. ii. 4; וְהָקִדְוּ אֶת הַסְּפָרִים, and Hezekiah took the letters and read them . . . and spread each of them, 2 Kings xix. 14; see also supra, iv. 10; infra, verses 13. 15; Gesen. § 146, 4; Ewald, § 319). מְחִיבֵי is used adverbially, to qualify מְחִיבֵי, i. e., makes it stinkingly to ferment; for examples of this construction, see viii. 3. The absence of מְחִיבֵי in the Septuagint, the Vulg., Symmachus, and the Syriac, does not prove that it was originally a marginal gloss, and was afterwards inserted in the text, but only shews that those translators thought that the omission of it in the translation would give more faithfully the force of the original. מְחִיבֵי קָוָה, ointment of the perfumer, i. e., ointment prepared or spiced by the perfumer, which is expressed more clearly in Exod. xxx. 35, xxxvii. 29, by מְחִיבֵי קָוָה, i. e., perfumed ointment; hence the Septuagint appropriately renders it οὐνιστικῶν ἡλαίου ὑποσώματα, a preparation of sweet ointment, sweetly prepared ointment, and the Vulg., SUAVITATEM UNGUENTI, the sweetness of oil, or sweet oil. The assertion, therefore, of Desvoeux (p. 185) and others, that the Septuagint read מְחִיבֵי instead of מְחִיבֵי, and the Vulg., exhalation, instead of מְחִיבֵי, is gratuitous.

A little folly, &c. The great power which the insignificant fly has over the precious ointment, a little folly has over honourable wisdom. The great difficulty which commentators have experienced in interpreting this verse is chiefly confined to this clause,

and to its connection with the preceding hemistich. The Septuagint has, *τιμωσι δὲ λόγοι σοφίας ὑπὲρ διζαν ἀφροσύνης μεγάλην*, *a little wisdom is more honour than the great glory of folly*, dropping the *ו* from *בְּתוֹכָהּ*, connecting the latter with *קָצֵץ*, and construing the clause *הַקָּצֵץ קָצֵץ מְבֹרָךְ קָלִיל*. The Vulgate — *PRETIOSIOR EST SAPIENTIA ET GLORIA PARVA ET AD TEMPUS STULTITIA*, *wisdom and glory are more precious than small and short-lived folly*, taking the *ו* from *בְּתוֹכָהּ* and *קָלִיל*, and prefixing it to *קָצֵץ*, assigning to *קָצֵץ* a double sense, viz., *little, insignificant, and short, short-lived*, and construing the text as if it were *קָצֵץ וְקָלִיל מְבֹרָכִים קָצֵץ*; and St. Jerome's version, *PRETIOSA EST SUPER SAPIENTIAM ET GLORIAM STULTITIA PARVA*, *precious above wisdom and glory is a little folly*, taking the *קָצֵץ* *קָלִיל*, as something recommendable either as possessing few faults, or having simplicity, which, this Father says, is to be preferred to wisdom, because the latter is frequently connected with craftiness, and is to be chosen rather than glory, which is accompanied by pride — proceed as usual from the Hagadic interpretation, as may be seen from the Chaldee, *וְכָפִי יֵאָדָר וְהָיָה יָדָר מִן הַחֲכָמָה הַיְסוּדָה וְהָיָה יָדָר מִן הַחֲכָמָה הַיְסוּדָה*, *and how much more beautiful and precious than the wisdom of the wise, and the riches of the rich, is the man whose folly is slight and insignificant!* and from the Midrash: hence also Luther's translation, *darum ist zuweilen besser Thorheit denn Weisheit und Ehre*, *therefore folly is sometimes better than wisdom and honour*, which the Reformer says is intended as a consolation for those who are sometimes obliged to choose the position of fools, and keep back their good counsel in the presence of cunning statesmen, who have been raised to posts of honour. Coverdale's strange version, "dead flies that corrupt sweet ointment and make it to stink, are something more worth than the wisdom and honour of a fool," is a literal translation of the Zurich

Bible. Passing over these emendations, which are both arbitrary and contrary to the scope of the passage, we come to Ibn Ezra, who explains it *הַקָּצֵץ כְּמוֹ הַדּוֹבָבִים הַמְחִים יִבְאִישׁוּ מִדֶּן הַשֶּׁמֶן הַדּוֹקֵק כֵּן יִשׁ לְאִדָּם שְׂדוּחַ יָד מִחֲכָמָה וּמִכְבָּד שֶׁשׁ בּוֹ כְּלֹחַ מֵעַם כִּי כְּלֹחַ מֵעַם לֹחֵם יִבְאִישׁוּ וְכֹזֵר וּיִבְאִישׁוּ *the sweet ointment to stink, so is it with the man who is in estimation for wisdom and for glory that has a little folly, since the little folly of the wise man destroys his reputation, and makes it to stink*, taking the verb *יִבְאִישׁ*, *causes to stink*, from the first clause to govern the second member, regarding *קָצֵץ* as its subject, in the sense of *estimation, renown*, and the *ו* in *בְּתוֹכָהּ* and *קָלִיל* as *causative*; and is followed by the Bishops' Bible, "a dead fly doeth corrupt sweet ointment, and maketh it to stink: even so oftentimes he that hath been had in estimation for wisdom and honour, is abhorred because of a little foolishness;" the Geneva Bible, "dead flies cause to stink and putrefy the ointment of the apothecary; so doth a little folly him that is in estimation for wisdom and for glory," the Authorized Version, Grotius, Le Clerc, Mendelssohn, Friedländer, Michaelis, Holden, Rosenmüller, Preston, Philippson, Hengstenberg, &c. But we submit — 1. That this interpretation is at variance with the argument, which is to shew how completely the wise man is subject to the folly of others, how "one fool" may subvert all his wise plans, and not to demonstrate how a little folly, or a slight oversight on the part of the wise man, will destroy his reputation; 2. That it unwarrantably separates the *אֲשֶׁר יִבְאִישׁ* and makes *קָצֵץ* depend upon *יִבְאִישׁ* only; 3. That it is thereby necessitated to resort to a very harsh ellipsis; and 4. That it departs from the natural sense of the construction *קָצֵץ וְקָלִיל*, which all the ancient versions, however strange their explanations, rightly take to express the comparative. The easiest rendering, and the most compatible with the context, is that of the Syriae*

- 2 than honourable wisdom. 'Still the mind of the wise man
3 is at his right hand, but the mind of the fool at his left; and even when the fool walketh on the road he lacketh his mind,

אֲשֶׁר יִבְאִישׁוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ מְחַבֵּיב
לְחַבְלָהּ בְּקִשְׁתָּהּ חֲשִׁמְלָה
נִשְׁבָּרָה מִן מִלְּךְ נִשְׁחַלְלָה מִסֶּלֶךְ
מִסֶּלֶךְ לֵיבְחָהּ מִחֲכָמָה
כְּכִלְיָהּ *as the dead flies make to stink*

the vessel of sweet ointment, so a little folly is more weighty than wisdom and great glory; so also Rashi, Rashbam, Knobel, De Wette, Ewald, Noyes, Heiligstedt, Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, &c. קָצֵץ, as is rightly explained by Rashi and Rashbam, לשון כְּבֹד הוא כְּבֹד וְשִׁקֹּל יוֹתֵר מִן הַחֲכָמָה, retains here its original signification, weighty, heavy, and is construed with מִן, comparison, i. e., it is heavier and weighs more than wisdom; it is masculine, though referring to קָלִיל, fem., because it is placed at the beginning of the sentence (vide supra, vii. 7). קָלִיל is in apposition to מְבֹרָכִים, which it qualifies, so that בְּתוֹכָהּ מְבֹרָכִים, literally from wisdom, from honour, means from honourable wisdom (comp. נְדָבִים וְשִׁקֹּלִים, sacrifices, eucharists, i. e., eucharistic sacrifices, Exod. xxiv. 6; 1 Sam. xi. 15; מִקְרָם מִקְרָם, words, truth, i. e., truthful words, Prov. xxii. 21; Gesen. § 113; Ewald, § 287, c). This is more in accordance with the scope of the passage than the common rendering, "wisdom and glory," supplying the copula, as Coheleth does not treat upon glory or renown, but wisdom exclusively.

2. *Still the mind of the wise man, &c.* The utter inutility and inability of wisdom to exempt the wise from the destiny common to all men, hitherto demonstrated, does by no means imply that it is absolutely powerless and useless. If wisdom can do as little as folly to affect an arbitrary Providence which has no

regard for merit or demerit, yet it has a great advantage over folly in many other respects. The mind of the wise man is at his right hand, ready to guard and defend him from a thousand dangers, whilst that of the fool is out of its proper place, and is useless in cases of emergency. Here again, as in ii. 13, Coheleth, after having shewn the powerlessness of wisdom relatively, guards us against taking his assertion absolutely. To indicate this in the translation, we must supply the expression *nevertheless, still, or yet*. לֵב, heart, also mind, see i. 13. The use of the phrase *to be at one's right, for to stand by one, to be ready to assist, to defend* (comp. מִיְמִינִי, for *He is at my right hand*, i. e., to defend me, Ps. xvi. 8; וְיָדִי יְמִינֶךָ, the Lord is at thy right hand, i. e., to protect thee, Ps. cx. 5), shews that *to be at the left hand* means the reverse, *to be out of its place, missing*. That this is the sense is moreover evident from וְלֵב, *he misses his mind, it is absent*, which is used in the following verse to describe the condition of a fool; thus shewing beyond doubt that we are to understand by וְלֵב, *at his left hand*, to be absent from its proper place.

3. *And even when, &c.* Nor can this want of wisdom be concealed; it is so glaring that everybody sees it as soon as the fool leaves his house and sets his foot on the street to go somewhere, inasmuch as he is bewildered and ignorant of the commonest roads, in the very place where he has spent all his life. בְּדֶרֶךְ, *on the way*, is not used figuratively for his undertakings and intercourse with men (Ibn Ezra; see Coverdale, Reynolds, Patrick, Knobel, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c.), but is used in its literal sense, *on the road, when he has to walk to any place* (Rashi, Rashbam, Grotius, Le

11 if the serpent bite without enchantment, there is no advan-

the design of this verse, and involves an unnecessary violation of the pause-accent over the next clause. The rendering of *חֲזָקָה* by *physical power, strength, force*, is contrary to its uniform signification. When Hengstenberg declares that "*חֲזָקָה* occurs also elsewhere in the sense of *strength, force* kommt auch sonst in der Bedeutung Strafe vor," we submit that neither he, nor Gesenius in his Thesaurus and Lexicon, nor any one else has been able to adduce a single instance to substantiate the assertion. Besides here the plural *חֲזָקָה* occurs twenty times more (1 Kings xv. 20; 2 Kings xxv. 23, 26; 1 Chron. vii. 5, 7, 11, xi. 26; 2 Chron. xvi. 4; Isa. xxx. 6; Jerem. xl. 7, 13, xli. 11, 13, 16, xlii. 1, 8, xliii. 4, 6; Dan. xi. 10), and, with the exception of the disputed passage in Isa. xxx. 6, invariably denotes *military hosts, armies*, and is so rendered in all versions of the Bible and by all lexicographers. We have therefore no right to depart from this meaning here, especially when its regular signification yields excellent sense. Coheleth tries to expose the folly of raising a blunt and ineffective weapon against a monstrous despotism, and, to render this exposure more striking and effectual, he reminds the feeble sufferer that, by attempting to subvert this tyrannical power with inefficient means, he would only cause the tyrant to increase and strengthen his armies, and thereby also augment his own sufferings. For the *ו* before *חֲזָקָה*, introducing the apodosis, see viii. 17. *יָצַר*, the Piel of *צָר*, *to be strong, to increase the strength, &c.* (comp. Zech. x. 6, 12). The signification *to strengthen, to sharpen*, which is assigned to it by the Vulgate and St. Jerome, followed by Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, &c., regarding *חֲזָקָה* as its *object*, and *חֲזָקָה* as used *adverbially*, does violation both to the text and context. As *צָר*, *to be right*, is also

used to denote the *result* of being right, i. e., *success* (vide supra, ii. 21). Rashi, Rashbam, and Ibn Ezra, who are followed by Gesenius, De Wette, Knobel, Noyes, Preston, Vaihinger, &c., take it in its secondary sense, i. e., *success*; whilst Herzfeld, Philippson, Hengstenberg, &c., retain the primary meaning *right*, which yields excellent sense, and is therefore preferable, not however in the shade of meaning which they give it. *חֲזָקָה*, *Hiphil infinit. absolute*, accordingly signifies *making right, repairing, mending*; it is in the genitive, depending upon *חֲזָקָה*, i. e., *the advantage of repairing*; it is the prerogative of wisdom to repair the mischief which the folly of raising a feeble arm against deeply-rooted tyranny brings about. The Septuagint's rendering of it by *man*, the Vulgate's and St. Jerome's rendering *diligence*, which is followed by Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, &c., as well as Hitzig's alteration of it into *חֲזָקָה*, *the infinitive construct*, are inadmissible and arbitrary.

11. *If the serpent bite, &c.* As the preceding verse concluded with the remark that it is the prerogative of wisdom to repair the mischief caused by the precipitate conduct of the foolish, Coheleth now urges upon the wise that unless their wisdom is exerted for the good of the sufferers, unless the serpent provoked to come from its habitation to sting the assailants, is prevented by the superior skill of the wise from infusing its deadly poison, their wisdom will be useless. Just as the illustration used in the preceding verse was suggested by the second clause of verse 9, so the one in this verse has been suggested by the second clause of verse 8, the second suggestion being taken up first, and the first second. For similar inversions, see vii. 7. From the remotest antiquity to the present day we find throughout the East a large number of itinerant serpent charmers. These charmers

travel about towns and villages to tame serpents, which they effect either by cantillating certain forms of exorcism, or by some other mysterious adjuration, alluring them to come forth from the fissures in the walls of houses, and rendering them incapable of darting at any one. "As the serpent seeks the darkest place in which to hide itself," says a modern traveller, "the charmer has in most cases to exercise his skill in an obscure chamber, where he might easily take a serpent from his bosom, bring it to the people without the door, and affirm that he had found it in the apartment, for no one would venture to enter with him after having been assured of the presence of one of these reptiles within; but he is often required to perform, in the full light of day, surrounded by spectators, and incredulous persons have searched him beforehand, and even stripped him naked, yet his success has been complete. He assumes an air of mystery, strikes the wall with a short palm-stick, whistles, makes a clucking noise with his tongue, and spits upon the ground, and generally says, 'I adjure you by God, if ye be above, or if ye be below, that ye come forth; I adjure you by the most great name, if ye be obedient, come forth; and if ye be disobedient, die, die, die!' The serpent is generally dislodged by his stick from a fissure in the wall, or drops from the ceiling of the room. I have often heard it asserted that the serpent-charmer, before he enters a house in which he is to try his skill, always employs a servant of that house to introduce one or more serpents; but I have known instances in which this could not be the case, and am inclined to believe that the durweeshes above mentioned are generally acquainted with some real physical means of discovering the presence of serpents without seeing them, and of attracting them from their lurking places" (Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, ii. p. 106). "I have seen many serpent-charmers."

says Dr. Thomson, "who do really exercise some extraordinary power over these reptiles. They carry enormous snakes, generally black, about them, allow them to crawl all over their persons and into their bosoms, always, however, with certain precautions, either necessary or pretended to be so. They repeatedly breathe strongly into the face of the serpent, and occasionally blow spittle, or some unmedicated composition upon them" (*The Land and the Book*, London, 1859, p. 154). The Psalmist, speaking of the malignity of the incorrigibly wicked, compares it to the venomous serpent which is proof to all the efforts of the charmer (Ps. lviii. 5); and God declares that he will send serpents against his people "which are not to be charmed" (Jer. viii. 17; compare also Sirach xii. 13; Bochart. *Hieroz.*, part ii. lib. 3, c. 6, where this subject is most elaborately treated; Hengstenberg, *Egypt*, and the *Books of Moses*, p. 100, English ed.; Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, s. v. *Zauberei*). The wisdom and skill of such a charmer will be useless, if they are not exerted to prevent the reptile from darting upon the people. The article in *חֲזָקָה*, *the serpent*, refers to the serpent mentioned in verse 8. *בְּלֹא*, literally *in not, not in*, i. e., *without* (comp. *הָאִיָּה חֲזָקָה בְּלֹא שִׁפְתֵי מִקְרָה*, *give ear to my prayer, with no feigned lips*, Ps. xvii. 1; 1 Chron. xii. 33; 2 Chron. xxx. 18). *חֲזָקָה*, from *חָזַק*, *to whisper, to mutter magic formulas, to charm, is incantation, charm*, as is evident from Jer. viii. 17, where, as here, it is used with regard to the charming of serpents; so Aquila, *ἀποστον ὑποψῆς*, and Symmachus, *ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποστον*, *without contentment*. The *ו* in *חֲזָקָה*, as in the foregoing verse, introduces the *apodosis*. *בְּנִי הָאִיָּה*, *master of the tongue*, i. e., one who has such a mastery of his tongue as to deprive by its mysterious murmurings the venom of serpents, hence *an enchanter, a charmer*. Durell's suggestion, that *חֲזָקָה* may be a mistake for *חֲזָקָה*, caused by a transposition of letters

12 targe to the charmer. The words from the mouth of the wise man gain him favour, but those from the lips of the

is as unnecessary as it is gratuitous. The verse is well rendered by the Septuagint *ὁ δὲ ἀφ' οὗ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τῷ ἐπαγγέλλοντι*, and the

Syr. *ܐܢܬܐ ܢܡܐ ܒܠܐ ܚܝܢܐ ܐܢܬܐ ܚܝܢܐ ܚܝܢܐ*, if the

serpent bites, being unenchanted, there is no advantage to the enchanter; and beautifully explained by Rashbam, אם הנחש נושך את האדם בשביל שהנחש לא יחש עליו לחש הוא נושך ואין לו יתרון לבעל האדם, *if the serpent bites one because the charmer has not charmed it, there is no advantage to the charmer who knows how to charm, and does not do it, who rightly remarks that (לחש נוסל על הנחש) לחש נוסל על לחש* and *לחש* form a paranomasia. The rendering of the Vulgate, *si MORDEAT SERPENS IN SILENTIO, NIHIL EO MINUS HABET QUI OCCULTE DETRAHIT, if a serpent bite secretly, he is nothing better who backbites sily*, which St. Jerome explains, *SERPENS ET DETRACTOR SUNT ÆQUALES; QUOMODO ENIM ILLE SECRETO MORDENS VENENUM INSERIT, SIC ILLE CLAM DETRAHENS, VIRUS PECTORIS SUI INFUNDIT IN FRATREM, a serpent and a slanderer are alike, for just as the serpent stealthily infuses its poison, so he who is secretly slandering instils the venom of his breast into his brother*; and the explanation of Ibn Ezra, אין יתרון לבעל האדם מי הנחש הצטעני שלא יחש, *if the unenchanted serpent bites and has no advantage, no more has the backbiter*; which are followed by Luther (*ein Wäfscher ist nichts besser denn eine Schlange, die unbefchworen sticht, a babler is nothing better than a serpent which bites without enchantment*), misrepresented by Holden (p. 149), who affirms that Luther renders it "without provocation"; Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible ("a babler of his tongue; or a backbiter, is no better than a serpent that stingeth

without hissing"); the Geneva Bible ("if the serpent bite when he is not charmed, no better is a babler"); the Authorised Version ("surely the serpent will bite without enchantment, and a babler, or the master of the tongue, is no better"), Hodgson ("though the serpent sting without hissing, yet doth not he who hath a double tongue bite still more cunningly?") &c., owe their origin, as usual, to the Hagadic interpretation of this verse (comp. the Talmud, Erchin, 15, b; Tanith, 8, a; the Chaldee paraphrase, and the Midrash, *in loco*), and are both against the genius of the language and contrary to the scope of the passage.

12. *The words from the mouth, &c.* Having exposed the folly of attempting to raise a feeble opposition against a powerful despot, Cohoeleth recurs to the remark he has made in verse 4, that it is the part of the wise man patiently to bear that which cannot be removed, and to use conciliatory language, which will, after all, secure favour, whilst the words which the fool employs will bring him into ruin. *וְעַן* is not *grace* in the sense of *graceful*, the abstract for the adjective (Luther, Coverdale, the Bishop's Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version in the text, Holden, Knobel, Ewald, De Wette, Heiligstedt, &c.), but *favour*, i.e., *favour procuring*; his words are such as conciliate or procure favour or acceptance (Rashbam, Hodgson, Herzfeld, Noyes, Hitzig, Stuart, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c.), as is evident from the antithesis. The construct *וְעַן*, from the first clause, is to be supplied before *וְעַן* in the second hemistich, i.e., *וְעַן וְעַן*, and the words of the lips of, &c.; cases in which words are taken over from one hemistich into the other are of frequent occurrence (comp. the following verse; xi. 5, xii. 11, 13; Ps. xx. 7; Prov. iii. 12), and inattention to this

13 fool destroy him; the beginning of the words of his mouth is folly, and the end of the words of his mouth is mischievous

fact, on the part of translators, has produced inextricable confusion in the translations of different passages of Scripture; as, for instance, Isa. xxxi. 6, *וְיִהְיֶה צֶמֶחַ בְּן יִצְחָק יְהוָה, as birds protect their chickens, so Jehovah of Hosts protects Jerusalem*, to which the tender expressions of our Saviour in Matt. xxiii. 37 seem to allude, but which yields no sense in the common renderings. Failing to see this in the passage before us, commentators are not only compelled to take *וְעַן* metonymically for *speech*, but to make the masculine verb *וְעַן* the predicate of the feminine noun *וְעַן*. The plural const. *וְעַן*, instead of the dual *וְעַן*, which also occurs in Ps. xlv. 3, lix. 8; Song of Songs iv. 3. 11, v. 13; Isa. lix. 3, is owing to the fact that the dual form is gradually dropped in the later phases of development in the language (comp. Gesen. § 88, 2; Ewald, § 180). The pronoun in *וְעַן* does not refer to the wise man, or any one else, as the Hagadic interpretation will have it (comp. the Midrash, the Chaldee, and Rashi), which is adopted by St. Jerome, who remarks, *ET REVERA PRÆCIPITUR SAPIENS QUANDO IN AUREM LOQUITUR IMPRUDENTIS, ET VERBA EJUS IN PROFUNDO UT ITA DICAM GURGITE PEREUNT, a wise man is as if he were thrown down, when he speaks in the hearing of a fool, and his words perish, if I may say so, in a deep gulf*, and followed by Luther, Bishop Patrick, Schmidt, Umbreit, &c., but refers to the fool himself. For the verb singular *וְעַן*, referring to the plural noun *וְעַן*, see verse 1. Mendelssohn's rendering of this verse, "the words of a wise man's mouth are, 'Shew mercy,' but of the lips of the fool, 'Destroy him!'" taking *וְעַן* as the second person, and regarding it as the expression used by the fool, which is followed by Friedländer and Preston, is simply preposterous, and is completely set aside

by the similar construction in the following verse.

13. *The beginning of, &c.* The reason why the words of the fool are his ruin, is, that they are replete with folly and mischief from beginning to end. *וְעַן* and *וְעַן*, like our phrase "from beginning to end," denote the whole, altogether (*vide supra*, iii. 11), and are tersely explained by Ibn Ezra *אין ממש להכריז חזקה וכו', there is no sense in his words from beginning to end*. Accordingly *וְעַן*, as in the foregoing verse, is to be supplied before *וְעַן* in the second clause from the first hemistich, which is rightly done by the Sept. (*ἀρχὴ λόγων στόματος αὐτοῦ ἀφροσύνη, καὶ ἐσχάτη στόματος αὐτοῦ περιφροσύνη*), the Chaldee (*פרימי פרימי פרימי*), the Bishops' Bible ("the beginning of his talking is foolishness, and the last word of his mouth is stark madness"), Ewald, &c. This shews beyond doubt that our construction of the preceding verse is the legitimate one. The inconsistency of taking *וְעַן* in the second clause, metonymically for *his talk* (the Auth. Version, Desvoeux, Knobel, De Wette, Noyes, Heiligstedt, &c.), or of applying *וְעַן* to *וְעַן*, i.e., *the end of his mouth*, that is, *the end which his mouth makes of its discourse* (the Vulg., the Geneva Bible, Herzfeld, Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, Hengstenberg, &c.), is evident from the parallel construction in the first clause. Still more objectionable are the renderings, "the consequence of his words is mischievous madness" (Mendelssohn, Schmidt, Friedländer, Preston, &c.), "the beginning of the words of his mouth is folly, but the end of his discourse is absurdity that bringeth mischief" (Hodgson), &c.

14 madness. The fool also speaketh much, though no man

14. *The fool also, &c.* Another characteristic of the fool is, that he talks much upon everything, and about the most profound and mysterious subjects, though no man knows, nor can get to know, what events will transpire here, and what will be hereafter. The וְהַפֶּה introduces an additional feature, and, as frequently elsewhere, signifies *moreover, also*. וְהַפֶּה literally *he multiplies words*, i. e., *speaks much*; the subject upon which the fool here exercises his loquaciousness cannot be mistaken from the remainder of the verse; it is about כִּי־שֶׁהָיָה וְאַחֵר, *what will take place here and hereafter*, which no man, however wise, can know, much less such a fool. The particle *although, or yet*, which is not unfrequently omitted, must be supplied before אֲלֵ. The phrase אֲלֵ־לֹא־יָדַע הָאָדָם means *no man knows or can know* (comp ix. 1. 12; and אֲלֵ־יָמְצָא הָאָדָם, *no man finds or can find*, iii. 11, vii. 14, viii. 17). כִּי־אַחֵר, *from after him*, i. e., *from the time when he will be no more, after his death*; the phrase אֲחֵר is of frequent occurrence in this book, and invariably signifies *what shall be after life is finished, after death, hereafter*; whilst הָיָה by itself denotes the future; so that כִּי־שֶׁהָיָה means *what a day or the morrow may bring forth, and אֲחֵר הָיָה, what shall be hereafter, after death*. The additional clause כִּי־יִגֵּד לוֹ, which is used as an *emphatic denial*, is to shew the total impossibility of knowing these things about which the fool prattles; men of far greater capacities than he not only cannot get to know these things by their own cogitations (רָצָה), but are unable to ascertain them from others (יָדַע). The difficulty which commentators have felt in developing the sense of this verse, and in tracing its connection with the foregoing verse, it will, we believe, appear groundless, from this simple analysis of the text, and has evidently arisen from the loose and discordant paraphrases of the ancient

versions and mediæval expositors. Thus the Septuagint has καὶ ὁ ἄφρων πληθύνει λόγους· οὐκ ἔγνω δ' ἀνθρώπος· τί δὲ γινόμενον καὶ τί τὸ ἐσόμενον· ὃ δὲ ὁπίσω αὐτοῦ τίς ἀπαγγέλλει αὐτῷ; and *a fool multiplies words; man knows not what has been and what shall be; what is after him who can tell him?* altering the future שֶׁהָיָה into שֶׁיִּהְיֶה, regarding the כ in אַחֵר as a pronoun, and connecting it with the last clause. The Vulg., STULTUS VERBA MULTIPLICAT; IGNORAT HOMO, QUID ANTE SE FUERIT; ET QUID POST SE FUTURUM SIT, QUIS RI POTERIT INDICARE? *a fool multiplies words; man does not know what was before him, and what shall be after him who can tell him?* and St. Jerome, ET STULTUS VERBA MULTIPLICAT; IGNORAT HOMO QUID SIT, QUOD FACTUM EST, ET QUOD FUTURUM EST POST EUM, QUIS ANNUNCIABIT EI? *and a fool multiplies words; man knows not what has been, what is, and what shall be after him; who shall declare it unto him?* also alter כִּי־שֶׁהָיָה into שֶׁיִּהְיֶה; the latter, moreover, inserts שֶׁהָיָה and explains it QUUM STULTUS NEC PRÆTERITORUM MEMINERIT, NEO FUTURA AGNOSCAT, ET IGNORANTIÆ TENEBRIS VOLUTETUR, FALSAM SIBI SCIENTIAM REPROMITTENS, IN EO DOCTUM SE PUTAT ET SAPIENTEM, SI VERBA MULTIPLICAT, *when a fool neither remembers the things which are past, nor knows the things which are to come, and stumbles in the darkness of ignorance, he assures himself of a false knowledge, and thinks himself learned and wise if he only multiplies words*. But, apart from the arbitrary alteration of the text, this interpretation makes הָאָדָם, *man*, identical with הַפֶּה, *the fool*, mentioned in the first clause, which is both contrary to the uniform meaning of הָאָדָם in such constructions, and clogs the whole sentence. If the sacred writer had intended to convey this idea, he would undoubtedly have omitted הָאָדָם altogether. The explanations of Rashi, וְהָסֵב יָדָה דְּבָרִים גּוֹר וְאִמְרָה מִדֵּי, *and the fool says, I will eat and drink, for I know*

knoweth what shall be here nor what shall be hereafter; 15 who can tell him it? The work of a fool wearieth him,

וְהָיָה מֵאֲחֵרָיו כִּי יִגֵּד לוֹ כְּלוּמָר לֹא סוֹף דְּבַר שֶׁאֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ כִּי־יִהְיֶה לְאַחֵר וְכֵן אֵלֵא אִךְ הַהוּא עֲנִשִּׁי מֵאֲחֵרָיו שֶׁלֹּא נִכְנַד עֵינָיו אֵלֵא מֵאֲחֵרָיו עֲרֻפָּה מִדְּחֹק צִוָּךְ הוּא שִׂיחָה מִי יִגֵּד לוֹ "and the fool multiplies words," i. e., *he fixes and declares I shall do so and so to this and that one tomorrow, and does not know what may be tomorrow*. "And what shall be," &c., i. e., *he not only does not know what may happen after the lapse of a little time, but does not even know what is taking place behind his back at this present moment*; and Rashbam, מְרַבֵּה דְּבָרִים שֶׁל כְּסִלּוֹ, *and Rashbam* וְאֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ וְכִמְכִּין דְּרֵעָה אֲשֶׁר תָּנֵא וְהִנֵּי לוֹ כְּסוּפָה וְכֵן דְּרֵעָה אֲשֶׁר הֵבֵא עָלָיו פְּתוּמִים מֵאֲחֵרָיו כְּאִשֶּׁר יֵךְ בְּדַרְכּוֹ אֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ כִּי מִי יִגֵּד לוֹ, *the fool talks much foolishness, and does not know nor understand the evil which will come upon him at his end; and even the evil which may be close behind his back, when walking on the road, he does not know, for who can tell him it?* according to which the verse ought to be translated "and the fool talks much; the foolish man knows not what the future will be, yea, not even what is now going on behind him," which are followed by Mendelssohn and Friedländer, incur the additional censure of taking אַחֵר as a preposition of place, i. e., *behind one's back*, contrary to the sense which it invariably has in this book, as will be seen from the above-cited passages. The Chaldee paraphrase, וְשֶׁהָיָה מִכֵּיץ פְּתֻמִּין קִרְקִין דְּלִיהָ קְדוֹן צִוָּךְ עֵד דְּלֵא יִדְעַת אֵלֵשׁ כִּי־יִהְיֶה לְאַחֵר לְקִמְרָה לְקִמְרָה וְכֵן דְּקִמְרָה לְקִמְרָה מִכֵּיץ מֵאֲחֵרָיו לִיהָ, *and the fool multiplies empty and useless words, so much so, that no man can know what will be in his days, and what will become of him at the end who can tell him?* which is followed by Prestou, Hitzig, Stuart, &c., is contradicted by the indisputable signification of the same expressions in the passages already quoted. Ibn Ezra's explanation, וְהָסֵב יָדָה דְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הוּא יוֹדֵעַ, *and the fool says, I will eat and drink, for I know*

not what will happen here or hereafter, taking מִי־שֶׁהָיָה וְאַחֵר as a *minesis* or representation of *what the fool says*, which is followed by the Geneva Bible ("for the fool multiplieth words, saying, man knoweth not what shall be," &c.), and others, is sufficiently refuted by iii. 22, vi. 12, viii. 17, where it is evident that it is the sentiment of Coheleth himself, and not of the fool. Coverdale, "a fool is so full of words, that a man cannot tell what end he will make; who will then warn him to make a conclusion?" the Bishops' Bible, "a fool is full of words, and a man cannot tell what shall come to pass; who will then warn him of it that shall follow after him?" Geier and Hodgson, "though the fool use many words, no man can tell what they mean, and to what purpose they tend no man can inform him," are as curious as they are irreconcilable with the text.

15. *The work of a fool, &c.* As in his sayings, so in his doings, the folly of the fool manifests itself to his detriment. The duties of a life spent under a tyrannical government, which the wise man contrives to discharge with comparative ease by conciliatory words and deeds, thoroughly weary the fool, because of his utter ignorance of the things easily come-at-able and familiar to everybody. Cities being capitals of all the adjacent country, are much talked of and well known by the surrounding inhabitants. As one who does not know the high road to the capital must be extremely ignorant, the phrase not to be able to discover the beaten and much-frequented track to the town became a proverbial expression to denote a fool who is ignorant of the most ordinary things appertaining to the journey of life, just as we say, "He has not wit enough to travel on a broad open highway." We have had similar language in verse 3. The

bread and wine, which cheereth life, into revelry, and the

detached sentence and word, we come to the Rabbins of the middle ages. According to Rashi, Rashbam, and Ibn Ezra, the meaning is, "a banquet is prepared for enjoyment, and wine that cheers the living; but money procures it all;" hence the necessity of labouring to acquire it, and not indulging in the laziness described in the foregoing verse. Against this explanation is to be urged—1. That *חֵמֶה*, being simply another expression for *חֵמֶה* in verse 17, cannot be taken in a good sense. 2. That though *חֵמֶה*, by itself, may mean *prepare a feast*, like *חֵמֶה* in Chaldee (Dan. v. 1), to which Rashi appeals, yet its connection here with *חֵמֶה* precludes the idea of giving an entertainment. 3. To take this verse as holding forth the consequence of being able to give entertainments as a bait for industry, is utterly at variance with verse 18, and with the whole scope of the passage. The versions of the Reformers are more discordant and far-fetched than those of the Rabbins. Luther in his commentary translates it *denn sie erlangen ihr Brot mit Lachen, und der Wein muß die Lebendigen erfreuen*, and daß Geld muß ihr sein, u. s. w., *for they gain their bread by laughing; and wine must rejoice the living, and money must be theirs, &c.*; which he explains, *there are a large number of dangerous nobility in the courts of princes who have not the fear of God nor true wisdom, and gain their bread by flattering, by eating and drinking with the debased, &c., they think of nothing but eating and drinking, and are of no use to kings but to empty the purse and the cup; these look for money, and think of nothing but money, &c.* But this is at variance with the words of the text. In the last edition of his translation of the Bible, however, it is rendered *daß macht, sie machen Brot zum Lachen, und der Wein muß die Lebendigen erfreuen, und das Geld muß ihnen alles zuwege bringen, hence they make bread for laughter, and*

wine must rejoice the living, and money must procure everything, which seems to favour the interpretation we defend. The rendering of the Zurich Bible, *Speß macht die menschen lachen; und weyn macht sy frölich: dem gelt aber sind alle ding ghorfam*, which is literally adopted by Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible, "meat maketh men to laugh, and wine maketh them merry; but unto money are all things obedient;" the Geneva Bible ("they prepare bread for laughter, and wine comforteth the living, but silver answereth to all"), and the Authorised Version ("a feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry—marg., glad the life—but money answereth all things"), being substantially the same; and which is explained by Poole, Hodgson, Holden, Noyes, &c., as commending that which is procured by diligence, i. e., money, affirming that whilst other things, even the best of them, such as bread and wine, have a limited use, one making us laugh, the other merry, money procures all, is simply a modification of the Rabbinic view; and 1. Is guilty of taking *חֵמֶה* in a good sense, in common with the Rabbins; 2. Is contrary to the genius of the language, inasmuch as *חֵמֶה* can never have this sense in connection with *חֵמֶה*: had the sacred writer intended to convey this idea he would undoubtedly have written *לִבְיָאֵם* or *לִבְיָאֵם*, which is the established description of *חֵמֶה*, just as *לִבְיָאֵם* or *לִבְיָאֵם* is of *חֵמֶה* (comp. Ps. civ. 15); and 3. The preceding verses, as well as the following verse, shew that it is not "a detached and isolated apophthegm, teaching the extensive sway and predominating power of wealth." Other explanations, which connect this verse with the preceding one by supplying *who, while, where*, or some other expression, as, for instance, "through idleness of the hands of those men the house drop-peth through, who make feasts for laughter, and prepare wine to make

20 money of — is made to supply both. Still do not

their life merry, and whose money doth readily answer all these greedy lusts" (mentioned by Reynolds); "through idleness of hands the house will drop, while they make feasts to divert themselves, and spend their life in making themselves merry with wine and oil, money supplying with them the want of everything else" (Desvœux); "through negligence the house bursts, where feasting is made for revelry, where wine cheers the living, and all the money is spent for it" (Döderlein); "those who give entertainments from sheer sensuality, and cheer their carousing comrades with wine, with these money answers all things" (Mendelssohn and Friedländer); "through remissness of the hands a house drops through, to the derision of those who acquire by industry bread and wine that cheers the people, and money that furnishes everything" (Preston); &c., &c., are too far-fetched, and have deservedly been left to their respective authors. We have now to mention the interpretation generally adopted by the most respectable critics of the present day, viz., "for luxury they (i. e., the lazy rulers) make feasts; and wine cheers the living (i. e., these living ones), and their motto is, Money supplies all." To this effect, Nachtigal, Knobel, Herzfeld, De Wette, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Philippson, Elster, Vaihinger, &c. But against this is to be urged—1. That the rendering of *חֵמֶה* by *to make for luxury*, is unnatural; 2. That it violently separates *חֵמֶה* from *חֵמֶה*, its usual concomitant, as is evident from the adjunct *חֵמֶה* (comp. the above-quoted passage from Ps. civ. 15); and 3. That to say "wine cheers the hearts of these living ones" amounts to nothing, inasmuch as it predicates nothing wrong, since this is the proper object of wine, whereas the sacred writer evidently intends thereby something bad.

20. Still do not revile the king, &c.

However, the very depravity and tyranny of the sovereign and rulers ought to make us very cautious in speaking against them, as no mercy can be expected from such an administration. This is the reason why Coheleth himself has spoken all along so covertly about the abuses in high places. To be plain is dangerous. No matter how hidden and safe we may think the place where we speak, the secret will escape; there are spies in our families, in our innermost room, who will report; it will creep out in some unforeseen and surprising way, as if the bird which settles upon the window listened to what we said, and conveyed it to the despot. The phrase "the bird of air shall convey the report," is evidently proverbial, and corresponds to the many similar sayings of the same import, both in the Scriptures and classics. Thus, *the stones of the wall, and the brick from the timber*, are represented as declaring injustice perpetrated (Hag. ii. 11); and the *stones*, we are told, would forthwith proclaim the blessings of the King Messiah (Luke xi. 40). So also Juvenal:—

O Corydon, Corydon, secretum divitis ullum
Esse putas? Servi ut taceant, jumenta lo-
quentur

Et canis et postes et marmora; "Claude
fenestras

Vela tegant rimas, junge ostia, tollite lumen
E medio (clamant omnes) prope nemo recum-
bat;

Quod tamen ad cantum galli facit ille secundi
Proximus ante diem caupos! cet."

"And dost thou seriously believe, fond swain,
The actions of the great unknown remain?
Poor Corydon! even beasts would silence
break,

And stocks and stones, if servants did not,
speak.

Bolt every door, stop every cranny tight,
Close every window, put out every light;
Let not a whisper reach the listening ear,
No noise, no motion; let no soul be near;
Yet all that passed at the cock's second crow,
The neighbouring vintner shall, ere day-
break, know."

SAT. ix. 102-108.

Comp. also Cicero pro Marcello 3; the Hebrew proverb, *אָזְנֵי הַבְּרִי, the wall has ears*, quoted in the Midrash on this passage; which also exists in German, *die Wände haben Ohren*;

2 the process of time thou mayest find the profit of it; give a portion thereof to seven and even to eight, for thou knowest

thy seed when showers approach (Hodgson), because—1. To render לְחַקֵּךְ by *sow thy seed*, is contrary to the *usus loquendi*; this is expressed in Hebrew by the established phrase וְרַע אֶת-חֲרִיקְךָ, which is used in verse 6. 2. לְחַקֵּךְ can neither mean *by*, *before*, nor *when*. 3. The following verse shows that *charity* is here spoken of, and not the pursuit of agriculture. Those, therefore, who, whilst admitting that it refers to charity, take it as a proverbial form of speech drawn from the manner of husbandmen (Bishops Reynolds and Lowth, *The Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, Lect. x., p. 108, ed. 1835; Holden, &c.), incur the first and second objections. לְב, *multitude, greatness, length, process*. יָמִים, *days*, also *time*, as consisting of a succession of days (comp. Gen. xlvii. 8; 1 Sam. xxvii. 11; 1 Kings ii. 11). The pronoun in חֲרִיקְךָ, referring to לְב, stands synecdochically for the *produce* or the *benefit* of the noun to which it refers (compare חֲרִיקְךָ הָאֲדָמָה בְּעֶבְרֶךָ וְעֶבְרֶךָ הָאֲדָמָה, *cursed be the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat it*, i. e., *the product of it*, Gen. iii. 17; Isa. i. 7, xxxvi. 16; Jer. v. 17).

2. *Give a portion, &c.* This charity is not to be restricted to these apparently unpromising circumstances; it should be of a general character. We are to help, by our diffusive liberality, as many as we possibly can, since we know not what a day may bring forth; reverses may come upon us, and we may then be relieved by the objects of our former benevolence. חֶלֶק, *portion*, refers to לֶחֶם, *thy bread*, in the foregoing verse, and must be supplied here (so Rashi, Rashbam, Heiligstedt, &c.) *To seven, and also to eight*, is an idiomatic phrase, denoting *many*. Two numerals are frequently coupled together, the latter rising in the scale above the former, to express an *indefinite number*, *some*, *several*, *many*, e. g.,

"once and twice," i. e., *several times* (Job xxxiii. 14; Ps. lxii. 12); "twice and thrice," i. e., *often* (Job xxxiii. 29; Isa. xvii. 6); "three and four," i. e., *frequently, many* (Exod. xx. 5, xxxiv. 7; Prov. xxx. 15. 18. 21; Amos i. 3. 6. 9. 11. 13, ii. 1. 4. 6); "four and five" (Isa. xvii. 6); "six and seven," i. e., *many* (Job v. 19; "seven and eight" Micah v. 4). Similar idioms exist in Greek and Latin; comp. the ἑπτά καὶ ὀκτώ of Homer; *bis et ter, bis terque* (Cicero. Quint. Fr. iii. 8; Cels. de re Med. iv. 12); *terquaterque, ter et quater, ter aut quater* (Horat. Od. i. 31, 13; Sat. ii. 7. 76; Virg. Georg. i. 410; Ovid. Metam. i. 179). The persons, as often, are implied in the numerals (*vide supra*, vi. 3; 1 Sam. xviii. 7; Isa. xxxvii. 36; Ps. xci. 7); so Rashi (צריכי חסד) *needy persons*, Rashbam (לכמה בני האדם) *to many men*, and most modern commentators. The Chaldee paraphrase and Ibn Ezra, however, regard these numbers as referring to *time*, the former to the *seventh and eighth month*, when we are to sow our portion of seed, and the latter to the *sacred number seven*, and the *eight days of the week*; but this is contrary to the context and the genius of the language, as this would require חֶלֶקְךָ וְחֶלֶקְךָ. Still more artificial and objectionable is the opinion that these numbers refer to *vessels*, thus cautioning those who trade by sea *not to stow all their property in one ship, but to divide it among seven or eight vessels* (Mendelssohn, Friedländer, Preston, &c.), or, which is substantially the same, *divide or constitute thy portion into seven or eight portions* (Nachtigal, Hitzig, Stuart, &c.); vereinige dich mit sieben oder achten, *unite thyself to seven or eight*, which Spohn explains, treibst du dein Gewerbe allein, so bist du in Gefahr, daß bey eintretendem Unglück dein ganzes Vermögen verlohren gehe. Triffst du aber mit mehreren in Gesellschaft, so verlierst du dann nur den

3 not what misfortune there may be upon the earth. When

einen oder den andern Theil, *if thou carriest on business alone, thou art in danger of losing the whole of thy property when misfortune comes; but if thou enterest into partnership with several others, thou wilt only lose a part*, thus cautioning us against risking all in one adventure. כְּדִי־יִהְיֶה stands for כְּדִי־יִהְיֶה וְכִי־יִהְיֶה; it not unfrequently happens that the accusative, which defines more closely the thing intended, is separated by intermediate words, especially from כִּי, *what*, and אֲשֶׁר, *which* (compare 2 Kings viii. 12, xii. 6; Esth. vi. 3; Ewald, § 287, b). To take this clause as an admonition to be benevolent *because impending calamities may deprive us of the means of doing good* (Rashi, Reynolds, &c.), or *because thou little knowest what misery there exists upon earth*, i. e., "being rich, thou art ignorant to what degree poverty and misery prevail upon the earth" (Holden), is against the scope of the passage, which propounds precepts of worldly wisdom, the observance of which will yield temporal advantages. St. Jerome's explanation of this verse is really marvellous. He finds in the two numbers the two Testaments composing the Holy Scriptures; the number "seven" being the *Old Testament*, because of the Jewish Sabbath which is therein enjoined to be celebrated on the *seventh day*; the number "eight" the *New Testament*, because the Saviour rose on the *eighth day*; "the evil" the *tortures of the wicked after death*, and "upon earth" meaning the *heretics living upon the earth*. And after expatiating upon the fact that the Jews restrict their faith to the Old Testament, the number *seven*, and Marcion, the Manichees, and other heretics to the New, the number *eight*, the sainted Father deduces from it the solemn lesson, NOS UTRIQUE CREDAMUS INSTRUMENTO; NON ENIM POSSUMUS DIGNOS CRUCIATUS, DIGNAMQUE PENAM JAM NUNO MENTE COMPREHENDERE, QUÆ REPOSITA EST

HIS QUI VERSANTUR IN TERRA JUDÆIS ATQUE HÆRETICIS E DUOBUS ALTÉRUM DENEGANTIBUS, *let us therefore believe both instruments, for indeed we cannot now comprehend the merited tortures and punishment reserved for those who are upon earth, for the Jews and heretics who deny either of them*.

3. *When the clouds, &c.* From acts of benevolence Coheleth passes over to the common work of life; and just as he recommends *general liberality* in the former case, because our shortsightedness might sometimes lead us to withhold our gifts, which, if bestowed, would perchance yield an ample return, so he tells, with regard to our every-day employment, that we are to be *generally active*. Our ignorance of the circumstances connected with our labours (verse 3) must not keep us from putting forth our exertions (4), inasmuch as they can never be known to us (5), but, on the contrary, ought to make us always active, since, for aught we know, one or the other effort may produce the desired effect (6). According to his usual manner, the sacred writer begins with stating facts, and then deduces from them the maxim he wishes to propound. Here then are the phenomena of nature; the rain and the wind, both at times neutralising our efforts; the former is detrimental to the harvest, the latter to the sowing; we see the one taking place *when the clouds are filled with rain*, and the other *when the trees are blown down*; all that we know about it beforehand, Coheleth ironically remarks, is that the tree will lie on the spot where it falls; we know as little about the phenomena of nature as we know about the objects of our charity. The perplexity which commentators have experienced in the interpretation of this verse is owing, we believe, to their attempts to connect it with the preceding verse. Thus Rashi regards it as still enforcing the lesson of charity by a reference to the objects

the clouds are full of rain they empty it upon the earth,
and when the tree falleth in the south or north, in the
4 place where the tree falleth there it lieth; whoso therefore
watcheth the wind shall not sow, and he who looketh at the

of nature, which freely communicate their blessings to those who stand in need of them. אמ ר'אבה עבדים מלאים בשם. ידעת שטופים ידקו נשמים על הארץ במקום שהטובה צומחת ונימחת שם טופה לנו, *when thou seest the clouds filled with rain thou knowest that they are destined to pour down their rain upon the earth; in the place where the good flourishes and is cut down there it is destined to abide, i. e., for the benefit of others; so should the rich man, whom God has filled with blessings, pour them forth to others: substantially the same* are Ibn Ezra, Bishop Reynolds, Grotius, Knobel, Elster, Vaihinger, &c. Others, again, whilst adopting Rashi's explanation of the first clause, regard the second as referring to death, when we are unable to do good, just as the tree, when cut down, bears no more fruit (Bishop Patrick, Rosenmüller, &c.); or explain it as describing the uncertainty of riches, thus giving a reason for the admonition to be benevolent whilst we have the means (Schmidt, &c.). Rashbam, again, takes it to set forth *disinterested* benevolence, כשם שאם ימלכו הכנים נשם שהם ידקו וישפחו על הארץ וכשם שאם יפול עץ בריום או בצפת במקום שיפול שם יה' הוא כך אי אפשר שלא תהנה מאותן שחקותיהם חלקה משלך, *just as the clouds that are filled with rain empty their contents upon the earth, and as the tree which falls in the south or north remains in the place, so it may be that thou wilt have no advantage from those to whom thou impartest a portion of what thou hast; whilst* Michaelis, Spohn, Umbreit, &c., maintain that the whole verse describes the impossibility of preventing misfortunes. Without entering into the particulars of each of these interpretations severally, we submit—
1. That all of them give a most unnatural sense to the second hemi-

stich; and 2. That the repetition of קָצַץ in the following verse, and indeed the whole tenor of it, shew beyond doubt that verses 3 and 4 are intimately and inseparably connected. All the difficulties vanish if we regard קָצַץ as descriptive of the *trees uprooted and prostrated by the wind*, the approach of which we cannot foretell, just as we cannot prognosticate when it will rain, thus forming the basis of the statement in the following verse. קָצַץ, the *accusative of place*, has here the force of קָצַץ, as in iii. 16, and in Esth. iv. 3, viii. 17; Ezek. vi. 13, where it is also in the construct state before מִצָּר, for which see i. 7, and Ewald, § 332, c. קָצַץ is the apocopated future of קָצַץ, with otiant מ (comp קָצַץ, Josh. x. 24; יָצַץ, Isa. xxviii. 12; Gesen. § 44, Rem. 4; Ewald, § 84, c).

4. *Whoso therefore watcheth, &c.* Inference from the fact stated in the foregoing verse. This then being the case, since we cannot foretell these phenomena; since all we know of them is when we see them marshaling their strength and committing their ravages upon the objects around us, the husbandman who watches the wind and clouds before he ventures to sow and reap, will never engage in agricultural pursuits, and have no return at all; just as in the case of charity mentioned in verses 1 and 2, he who is over-scrupulous in the distribution of alms may frequently lose a profitable return. As often, the second part of the preceding verse is taken up first, and the first part is here the second, for which see vii. 7. How this fact could have been so generally overlooked, when *the uprooting the tree* so manifestly answers to *the wind*, and when the very expression קָצַץ of the preceding verse is here repeated, is

5 clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest as little the course
of the wind as the formation in the womb of the pregnant,
so thou knowest not the work of God who worketh all

really surprising, especially as interpreters have ever been puzzled to explain this verse when detached from the foregoing one, and are obliged to regard it as an *imperfect comparison*, as a *protasis without the apodosis*, which we are told to supply.

6. *As thou knowest, &c.* Having adverted in verse 3 to the impossibility of knowing beforehand the state of the weather, and shewn in verse 4 *what we ought not to do* under these circumstances, Coheleth now submits that, great as our ignorance is of the course of the wind, and it is as great as that of the fœtus, this ignorance extends to all the works of God, and then shews us in the following verse *what we ought to do* in such a state of shortsightedness. The reason why the sacred writer mentions the course of the wind alone, and does not also allude to the *formation of the clouds*, which we might be led to expect at first sight, when comparing this verse with the preceding one, will be found upon a more close investigation of the context. Now, though the clouds as well as the wind were referred to in the preceding verse (4), yet were the *clouds alone expressly* mentioned in verse 3, the wind being described *only by its effects*. It is therefore to be expected that Coheleth, in exposing our ignorance of that which the husbandman allows to influence his work, would also distinctly mention the wind, and thus, with the clouds of verse 3, give *by name* the two objects quoted in verse 4. The comparison of our ignorance about the course of the wind with that of the fœtus is most striking, and expresses the *intensity* of this ignorance. A similar comparison is used in vi. 3 to convey a *thorough* absence of happiness. עצמות, *bones*, constituting the principal part of the body, is used metonymically for *the body*

itself, the bodily form (*comp.* Lam. iv. 7; Ezek. xxxii. 27), *the fetus*, and is here evidently chosen for its assonance with פֶּזַע in verse 3; it is the *subject*, and the predicate אָמְנָם יוֹדֵיעִים is to be mentally supplied from the preceding clause, as is frequently the case (*vide x.* 12). The Septuagint connects the first clause with the preceding verse, ἡ οὐκ οὔτις γινώσκων τὸν δόξαν τοῦ πνεύματος, among whom (*i.e., those who watch the wind, &c.*) there is none knowing what is the way of the wind, arbitrarily altering the text. The Vulg., QUOMODO IGNORAS, QUA SIT VIA SPIRITUS ET QA RATIONE COMPINGANTUR OSSA IN VENTRE PREGNANTIS: SIC, &c., as thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, and in what manner the bones are joined together in the womb of the pregnant, so, &c., which St. Jerome explains as describing the mysterious entrance of the soul into the body of the fetus, as well as the formation of the latter, and which is followed by the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, Holden, Gesenius, Fürst, &c., proceeds as usual from the Hagadic interpretation of this verse, and may be seen in the Chaldee, הֲכֻמָּא לִחְיָה דַּע מִבְרִין וְתִפְךָ רִיחָא נִשְׁמָתָא דִּיהִי בְגִינוּ עוֹלָמָא שְׂלֵילָא דְסָרִי כְּמִצְרָנָא דְאַמִּישָׁא מִצְרָנָא וְתִקְרָה קֳלָא תִקְנֵעַ אוּ דְכָר אוּ חֲמוּטָא עַד זִכֵן וְחוּלְיִיד not how the spirit of the breath of life enters into the body of an infant which rests in the womb of its pregnant mother, and as thou knowest not whether it is a male or female until it is born, &c., &c., and the Midrash. But this interpretation — 1. Severs the manifest connection between this verse and the preceding one, by assigning, contrary to the laws of exegesis, different senses to רִיחָא in these two verses; 2. Most unjustifiably paraphrases כְּמִצְרָנָא בְּתַנְּנוּ as if it were גִּבְרָתָא אוּ חֲמוּטָא, no instance

6 things. Sow, then, thy seed in the morning, and withhold not thine hand therefrom in the evening, since thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether both shall 7 be alike good; and the light shall be sweet, and it shall be

having been adduced by Gesenius and Fürst in their lexicons, where \aleph is used in such a sense, and the \aleph by which it is preceded plainly shewing that it is the *Caph* comparison; and 3. It introduces a new subject, viz., our ignorance of the formation and animation of the human body, which is foreign to the scope of the passage. The rendering, "as thou knowest not what is the way of the wind, just as [thou knowest not] the bones in the womb of her who is with child, so thou knowest," &c., now generally given of this verse, puts an exceedingly forced construction upon the words, which is by no means obviated by Rashi, who takes \aleph as inverted (comp. Gen. xiii. 10; Isa. xxiv. 2), i. e., "just as thou knowest not the formation in the womb . . . so thou knowest not what is the way of the wind, and so also thou knowest not the work of God," &c.

6. *Sow, then, thy seed, &c.* The lesson deduced from our ignorance of the operations of God is that we are to be always diligent. Since we know not the course of things, and cannot foretell whether our labours of the former or latter part, or both parts of the day, will be opportune, it is safest to be constantly at work, in which case we shall be sure to labour at the proper time. The *inferential particle*, as frequently, is omitted at the beginning of the verse, and must be supplied in the translation. For *morning and evening*, the two ends of the day, denoting the *whole of it, constantly*, vide iii. 11; x. 13. The \aleph in \aleph stands for \aleph , and has therefore the same meaning as the usual \aleph (comp. Gen. xlix. 27; Ps. xc. 6, with Gen. viii. 11). \aleph , from *sowing thy seed*, must be mentally supplied after \aleph , *withhold not thine hand*.

\aleph , which of the two, refers to both the morning and evening sowing here recommended; to which also \aleph , *this or that* (comp. Job. i. 16; Ps. lxxv. 8), and \aleph , both, refer. For \aleph , see ii. 21. \aleph , properly as one, is used for *alike*, because when two or more things do or suffer the same thing, they may be regarded as identical in this respect (comp. \aleph , *the wolf and the lamb shall feed like one*, i. e., *alike*, Isa. lxxv. 25; Ezra ii. 64). The Vulgate's rendering of the last clause by *ET SI UTRUMQUE SIMUL, MELIUS ERIT, and if both together, it shall be better*, which is followed by Luther, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, &c., making \aleph and \aleph depend upon \aleph and \aleph , a separate clause, is contrary to the word \aleph , which is the plural.

7. *And the light, &c.* If we will act in accordance with the foregoing advice; if we will be benevolent to all our fellow-creatures, and ever diligent in our business, we shall find life sweet, and have pleasure in living. The *light* and the *sun* are designedly used for *life*, in harmony with the *clouds, wind*, and especially the *day* spoken of in the foregoing verses. In addition to what has been said in explanation of the phrase *to see light*, for *to live*, in vi. 5, we quote a passage from Euripides, which is a striking parallel to the words in question —

Μὴ μὲ ἀπολέσῃς αὐρον. ἥδ' ἄρ' ἔδ' ὅς τις
Λύσσειν τὰ δ' ὅτι μὴ μὲ ἴδωιν ἀνακλόντες.

Destroy not my youth, to see the light
Is sweet, oh do not hurl me into the realm
of darkness!

IPHIGEN. IN AULIS, 1219-19.

The \aleph in \aleph has retained the short vowel *Patach*, because the guttural \aleph , which, like \aleph and \aleph , allows a sharpening of the syllable, though orthographically excluding the *Dagesh forte* (comp. 1 Sam. xvi. 7; Ezek. xii. 12;

8 cheering to the eyes to see the sun. For even if a man should live many years, he ought to rejoice in them all, and to remember that there will be many dark days, that all

Ewald, § 50, b). To make this verse begin a new paragraph, commending *the enjoyment of life* (Mendelssohn, Knobel, Herzfeld, &c.), or to take it as giving a *reason why* the preceding verses urge that man should industriously provide for life, viz., since notwithstanding all the evils connected with it, life has many enjoyments (Hitzig, Stuart, Hengstenberg, &c.), or to regard it as furnishing "another argument in favour of charity, to this effect: However great may be the sweets and pleasures of life, and whatever delights a man may enjoy, yet seasons of pain, and sickness, and sorrow will occur; and the experience of human frailty should melt his heart to active benevolence towards every suffering child of the dust" (Holden), is doing violence to the text and context unnecessarily. The explanation we have given leaves to the words their natural meaning, and is in harmony with the scope of the passage. The Syriac version, "light is sweet, and is pleasant to the eyes, and especially to those who see the sun," is nonsense; for those who cannot see the sun have no pleasure in light.

8. *For even if a man, &c.* The reason why man should put forth all those exertions to make life comfortable is, that this is the only scene of enjoyment; we ought therefore to make of it an uninterrupted holiday, however long our earthly existence, since we must remember the many dark and joyless days that will succeed it, when we shall moulder in the dust. The Egyptians, too, urged death as a reason for enjoying life. Herodotus tells us that at their feasts "a servant carries round to the several guests a coffin, in which there is the image of a dead body carved in wood, and painted to resemble nature as nearly as possible, about a cubit or two cubits in length; and, shewing

this to each of the company, he says, 'Gaze here; then drink and be merry, for when you die, such will you be' (ii. 78). This is the natural result, if a future state is denied. Compare Sirach ii. 24; Book of Wisdom ii. 1, &c.; 1 Cor. xv. 32; Hor. Od. lib. ii., od. iii. 13. \aleph , as usual, is *causal*, and assigns a reason *why every exertion should be made to procure enjoyment*. For \aleph , masculine, instead of \aleph , feminine, referring to \aleph , a feminine noun, see ii. 6. \aleph and \aleph are not to be rendered *indicatively*, as Döderlein, Rosenmüller, De Wette, Noyes, &c., will have it, who regard this verse as giving a reason *why* life is called sweet in the preceding verse (viz., *because if a man live many years he rejoices in them all, &c.*), as this contradicts the frequent complaints made in this book about the unnecessary anxieties and trouble which men create for themselves, and the constant *admonition to enjoy life*, and is based upon a misunderstanding of the preceding verse, but are to be rendered *obligatory*; and the \aleph in \aleph is also *causal*, and introduces the *principal reason*, i. e., life must be enjoyed, since we must bear in mind that this is the only scene of enjoyment, that a protracted, dreary, and joyless state is to follow it. \aleph , \aleph is, again, an attraction for \aleph , for which see ii. 24. \aleph is dependent upon \aleph , *he must remember that all which is coming is vanity, i. e., that the hereafter is all nothing*. The different interpretations of this verse are as conflicting as they are numerous. The Vulgate, *SI ANNIS MULTIS VIXERIT HOMO, ET IN HIS OMNIBUS LETATUS FUERIT, MEMINISSE DEBET TENEBROSI TEMPORIS, ET DIERUM MULTORUM, QUI CUM VENERINT, VANITATIS ARGUENTUR, PRÆTERITA, if a man live many years, and have rejoiced in them all, he ought to remember the dark*

9 which is coming is vanity ! Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in thy youthful days, and pursue the ways of thine heart, and the things which are seen by the eyes, and know that, respecting all these,

time, and the many days wherein, when they shall come, the things passed shall be accused of vanity, is utterly at variance with the text and context, and evidently proceeds from the Hagadic interpretation of this verse, which converts it into an orthodox remark cautioning us against sin (comp. the Chaldee and the Midrash). Hence also the explanation of Rashi, "if a man live many years he will rejoice in all good things, for he will remember that the days of darkness for the sinner shall be many ; all that shall come upon him will be distress ;" and substantially the same Rashbam. Ibn Ezra, again, submits that the meaning of the verse is "even if a man knew that he would live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet when he remembers the days of darkness in the grave that they will be many, every one that comes into the world is vanity to him," which is substantially followed by Desvoeux, &c. These far-fetched explanations are fully equalled by the rendering of Luther, wenn ein Mensch lange Zeit lebt, und ist fröhlich in allen Dingen, so gedenket er doch nur der bösen Tage daß ihrer so viel ist ; denn alles was ihm begegnet ist, ist eitel, *if a man live a long time and rejoice in all things, he still only remembers the evil days that they are many, for all which happened to him is vanity* ; and Coverdale, "if a man live many years and be glad in them all, let him remember the days of darkness, which shall be many ; and when they come, all things shall be but vain." Equally inadmissible is the interpretation of those who regard this verse as admonishing those who enjoy life never to forget that we must also suffer (Holden, Stuart, &c.), since — 1. Coheleth could not so definitely affirm that every man will suffer, and that,

too, many years ; 2. It is most incongruous to admonish a man to rejoice every year of his life (חַיָּיָא), and yet in the same breath tell him that he will have many a long year of afflictions, when he will be unable to enjoy himself ; and 3. The terms *light and sun*, used in the preceding verse for *life*, plainly shew that the phrase *the days of darkness* is used antithetically for death (comp. also Ps. lxxxviii. 12, 13, cxliii. 3 ; Job x. 21).

9. *Rejoice, O young man, &c.* The appalling conclusion stated in the foregoing verse, to which Coheleth was driven again and again by reasoning upon the current view about the destiny of man, and the fact that there can be no true enjoyment here with the prospect of annihilation before us, which chills and mars our earthly pleasures, leaves the cravings of the soul unsatisfied, and wrings from the agonising heart, panting after something higher and imperishable, the desponding and repeated cry, "Vanity of vanities ; all is vanity !" leads him at last to the true way of happiness. To be really happy, we must not only lead a cheerful life, and enjoy the earthly pleasures and blessings wherewith a benign Creator has so largely blessed us, but look forward to a future bar of judgment, which will regulate our conduct, restrain our enjoyments within lawful bounds, and make them consistent with our thoughts of a righteous retribution from a holy God. This enjoyment is to commence in that period of life when pleasures are most innocent, easily attainable, and unalloyed by cares and anxieties. It is to begin at that age which influences the whole of our after life ; a cheerful and happy disposition cultivated in our youth will yield its rich harvest

10 God will bring thee into judgment. Banish, therefore, sorrow from thy mind, and put away sadness from thy body,

in old age. For similar reasons is piety urged upon the young especially, in xii. 1. The לֵב in לֵבְךָ does not mark the object at which one is to rejoice (Doderlein, Schmidt, &c.), but denotes the *time*, and stands for יָמֶיךָ (comp. Isa. ix. 2), as is evident from the parallelism. As the heart is regarded as the *source of happiness*, whence joy, as it were, gushes forth upon the whole body (Prov. xiv. 30, xv. 13), hence it is here represented as *making man cheerful*. For the passive signification of לֵבְךָ , see vi. 9. The Massoretic reading לֵבְךָ , singular, instead of לֵבְךָ , plural, which is also to be found in forty-one of Kennicott's MSS., has evidently arisen from a desire of making this passage uniform with vi. 9, as well as from taking it as an *abstract*, or for the *act of seeing*, which also accounts for the Septuagint, the Vulg., the Syriac, and the Chaldee renderings. Herzfeld justly remarks that the abnormal *Quametz* under the לֵב in לֵבְךָ , instead of the normal *Pattach*, is owing to the accent *Sakefgadol*, which not unfrequently lengthens the *Segol* into *Pattach* (comp. לֵבְךָ , Gen. xliiii. 20, xlvii. 30), and more especially to the sense, drawing our attention to the very momentous doctrine propounded in this clause, and constituting it, as it were, a separate clause calling for a pause and reflection (comp. Ewald, § 100, c). Thinking that the former part of this verse speaks too much about present enjoyment, the Hagada tried to modify the words of the text, explaining לֵבְךָ by $\text{לֵבְךָ וְנִפְתָּח עֵינֶיךָ}$ and $\text{לֵבְךָ וְנִפְתָּח עֵינֶיךָ וְנִפְתָּח לֵבְךָ}$, and walk in meekness with the ways of thine heart, and be careful as to the seeing of thine eyes, and do not look upon evil (comp. also the Midrash, in loco). Hence the rendering of the Septuagint, καὶ περιπάτει ἐν ὁδοῖς καρδίας σου ἡμεῖς καὶ μὴ ἐν ὁράσει ὀφθαλμοῦ σου, and walk in

the ways of thine heart blamelessly, and not after the sight of thine eyes, which the Vulgate, the Syriac, and St. Jerome rightly reject. Rashi, Rashbam, and Ibn Ezra, who are also dissatisfied with such arbitrary treatment of the text, try to explain away this recommendation to enjoy life, by regarding it as *ironical*. But against this are — 1. All the parallel passages (ii. 10, 24, iii. 12, 13, 22, v. 18, vi. 9, vii. 14, viii. 15, ix. 7-9), in which present enjoyment is seriously recommended ; 2. The intimate connection of this verse with the immediately following one, where the same idea is expressed in a different form ; and 3. The design of the whole book, which is to cure the melancholy state into which the people had at that time fallen, and to subvert the systems of *ascetic life* which many had reared in consequence of their temporal sufferings, and their limiting retributive justice to this side of the grave. The apparent contradiction between this recommendation and the prohibition in Numb. xv. 39, mentioned in the Midrash (see also *supra*, p. 56), which has given rise to this unnatural interpretation, is removed by the fact that *two different kinds of pleasure* are spoken of in these two places. Moses prohibits *illicit* gratifications, whilst Coheleth recommends *innocent* pleasures, which pleasures are to be in harmony with our preparation for a future account of all our doings at the bar of judgment.

10. *Banish, therefore, sorrow, &c.* Having shewn, in the foregoing verse, that true happiness consists in both enjoying the present and looking forward to a future state, Coheleth now submits that we ought to regulate our life accordingly. The first remark contained in the first clause, viz., about enjoying the present, is taken up first. Here it is expressed in a negative form, that we are to

xii.1 for youth and manhood are vanity; and remember thy

banish all sorrow and sadness from our minds and bodies; there it is stated in a *positive* form, that we are to enjoy all earthly happiness. The additional reason here given for enjoying this life is strikingly different from the one given in verse 8. In verse 8, starting from the view that there is no hereafter, the *vanity of the future* is urged as an argument for enjoying the present; here, after having asserted that there is a final day of judgment, the *vanity of the present life* is given as a reason for not leading a life of anxiety and care. That עַצִּי and נַפְשִׁי denote *care* and *trouble*, is evident from the context, and from i. 18, vii. 3. St. Jerome's explanation, IN IRA OMNES PERTURBATIONES ANIMI COMPREHENDIT; IN CARNIS MALITIA UNIVERSAS SIGNIFICAT CORPORIS VOLUPTATES, in *anger* (the Preacher) comprehends all the *passions of the mind*, and by *wickedness of the flesh* he indicates all the *pleasures of the body*, which is followed by the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, Reynolds, Patrick, Hodgson, Holden, &c., is preposterous, and is rightly rejected by Luther, the Zurich Bible, Desvoeux, Knobel, Herzfeld, and most modern commentators. עֶרְוָה is not from עָרַב, to *dawn* (Gesenius, Knobel, &c.), as this would describe *early childhood*, which cannot be meant here, being incompatible with cares and anxieties, but from עָרַב, to *be black*, and accordingly denotes the *age when the hair of man is black* = *manhood*, as opposed to שֵׂנִי, which describes the time of life when the hair is *white* or *grey* = *old age*. The Chaldee has therefore appropriately rendered it by יוֹמֵי מַלְכוּתָא, the *days of black hair*; so also St. Jerome, Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Herzfeld, and Philippson; the latter rightly appeal to the Talmudic phrase שְׁחָרִי דְּרֵאשָׁא, *black-haired heads* (Nedarim 30, b), to denote *manhood*. This derivation shows more definitely the distinction between יָנוּחַ and עֶרְוָה; the former means *youth*, the

latter *manhood*. The Septuagint's rendering of it by ἀνοια, *folly*; the Vulgate *voluptas*; and the Syriac

ܝܠܕܝܬܐ, and *not knowledge*, are unwarrantable departures from the signification of the word. Hodgson's rendering, "for youth and its lusts are vanity," surpasses these versions.

1. *And remember, &c.* The second remark, contained in the second clause of xi. 9, is now taken up. Since God will one day hold us accountable for all the works done in the body, we are to set the Lord always before our eyes; we are to remember that he made us, and not we ourselves, and hence the lives which he has given us are to be spent in accordance with the laws he has instituted. The youth especially is warned to remember his Creator, because at this period of life the passions are strong, and the powers of discretion and restraint are feeble; and nothing is so sure to save him from turning the innocent pleasures recommended to him into voluptuousness and sensuality, as constantly bearing in mind that there is a righteous Judge, who holds us accountable for every action, from our very youth to the last moment of our existence. Moreover, the same reason which Coheleth used in urging cheerfulness upon the youth (xi. 9), also holds good with regard to religion. The youthful heart is more impressible, and the impressions received in tender age are hardly ever obliterated, and frequently influence the whole of one's after life. The יָנוּחַ in יָנוּחַ is not *inferential*, but is the regular *copula*, shewing the intimate connection of this verse with the preceding one; both resuming and elaborating upon the two remarks made in xi. 9. הַיּוֹם, like הַיּוֹם, *God*, הַיּוֹם, the *Holy One* (Prov. ix. 10, xxx. 3; Hos. xii. 1), and several titles of *man* (Gen. xli., xlii. 30; Isa. xix. 4, xxxvii. 6) is plural; the ancients

Creator in the days of thy youth, before the days of evil come, and the years arrive of which thou shalt say, I have 2 no pleasure in them: before the sun becometh dark, and

from time immemorial conceived *might, power, and dominion* as something distributed and manifold, see v. 10. The assertion of Holden and others, that "the employment of a plural appellation of God, in this and other passages of Scripture, was designed to indicate, though obscurely, a plurality of persons in the Divine Essence," greatly injures the true faith, and works into the hands of the enemies of this doctrine. The reading בָּרַךְ, in the *singular*, which is found in one hundred and forty-two of Kennicott's MSS., and is adopted by Houbigant, Spohn, &c., is contrary to the general usage of the appellations, and has evidently arisen either from a desire to do away with an apparent anomaly, or from an inadvertent dropping of the insignificant *v*, than which nothing is more easy and frequent. The appeal to the ancient versions, which, we are told (Houbigant, Spohn, Davidson, the Hebrew Text Revised from Critical Sources, p. 195), have all the singular, is preposterous. Who would ever think of appealing to Luther, Coverdale, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, all of which have the singular, to prove that the original from which they were made had the singular? These languages have not the same idiom, and to express it literally would represent the Hebrews as polytheists. Schmidt and Nachtigal's rendering, freue dich deines Daseins, *rejoice at thy existence*, i. e., do not overlook that thou art created, comparing בָּרַךְ with εὐχαριστέω, which stands for εὐχαριστία; (Wisdom v. 13), or deriving it from the Arabic بَرَا, *sanitas*, and making it denote die Jahre der Blüthe der Gesundheit, *the years of blossoming health*, only shews what learned blunders learned men may commit.

Before the days of evil, &c. We are to remember our Creator before

the vigour of life is wasted in carnal pleasures and sensuous gratifications; before we have contracted the penalties of excess, and become weary of our merited sufferings; before we are constrained, in a miserable old age, despondingly to exclaim, "I have no pleasure in life!" עַד is frequently used as a conjunction, *whilst*, joined to עַד = עַד it denotes *whilst that* (Song of Songs i. 12), and to אֵל it means *while not* (Prov. viii. 26), so that עַד אֵל עַד signifies *while that not*, i. e., *before*, and is well rendered by Symmachus *antequam*, the Syriac

ܕܝܢܐ, and the Chald. ܕܝܢܐ, the latter exactly corresponds to the Hebrew. It is to be observed that this combination עַד אֵל עַד is repeated three times in this description, viz., here, in the following verse, and in verse 6, to mark the transition from one subject to another ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ, the *days of evil* do not refer to the *ordinary infirmities of old age*, the ills that flesh is heir to, but characterise a suffering old age brought about by excess and lewdness, the result of having spent the youth of one's life in carnal gratifications, in *forgetfulness of the Creator*. For הָאֵל הַזֶּה, see i. 10, and for הָאֵל, *masculine*, instead of הָאֵל, *feminine*, referring to עַד, a *feminine* noun, see ii. 6.

2. *Before the sun, &c.* From this miserable old age Coheleth passes over to the approach of death, which he describes, under the figure of a gathering storm, when the splendour of the heavenly lights (the whole day, i. e., twenty-four hours) is obscured by the ever-returning clouds charged with fresh rain. Nothing could be more fitly compared with the approach of death to seize its victim, striking terror into all the inmates of the house, and defying all efforts of power and skill, than the threatening

when the noise of the mill shall grow faint, and the swallow shall rise to shriek, and all the singing birds shall retire;

every door shall be barred, and the great noise of the mills, arising from simultaneous grinding in every house, shall grow very feeble, because the grinders shall hide themselves, frightened at this gathering storm. "The door shall be closed," we are assured with equal confidence, means the most opposite and contradictory things, *the pores of the body* (the Talmud, *l. c.*, Rashi, Rashbam, Dr. Smith, &c.), *the fettering of the feet* (the Chaldee), *the lips* (Ibn Ezra), *the eyes* (Hengstenberg); whereas "the sound of the mills shall be low" denotes *the mastication and the grinding of the food in the stomach* (Talmud, *l. c.*, Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Dr. Smith, Holden, &c.), *the appetite for food shall depart* (the Chaldee), *the human voice shall grow feeble, or the enunciation shall become difficult* (Geier, Grotius, Döderlein, &c.). The *א* in *אָפֵּן* has here its natural local meaning, denoting the place where the closing of the doors takes place, *i. e.*, in the street. *אָפֵּן* is the infinitive construct, according to the analogy of *אָפֵּן*, with the preposition *א* denoting time (compare Gesen. § 132, 2). *אָפֵּן* is not grinding-maid or miller (the Septuagint, the Vulgate, Luther, the Zurich Bible, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, Desvenx, &c.), nor grinding (the Geneva Bible, the Auth. Version, Ewald, Noyes, &c.), but mill (Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Hodgson, Spolin, Knobel, De Wette, Gesenius, Herzfeld, Heiligstedt, Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, Philippon, Fürst, and almost all modern critics and lexicographers, Hengstenberg not excepted, for he, too, renders it *die Mühle*, only that his English translator has mistaken it for *das Mäßen*, and translates it "grinding"). Though the word occurs nowhere else in Biblical Hebrew its sense is indubitable, inasmuch as it is the common expression for mill amongst the Hebrews.

And the swallow, &c. Exceedingly beautiful and characteristic is the description of the change of birds in the gloomy atmosphere. The portentous swallows, in anticipation of the storm, quit their nests with shrieks to fly about; whilst the singing birds, which mount the air with their warbling songs, for the same reason descend and retire. That *אָפֵּן* is the subject of *אָפֵּן* is evident from the following clause, where the parallel *אָפֵּן* is the subject of *אָפֵּן*, and from the whole tenor of the description. As the Hebrews use the generic term *אָפֵּן*, the bird, in descriptions, the particular bird intended must be gathered from the tone of the passage, and expressed in the translation. Here the swallow is most probably meant, which flies about shrieking before the approach of the storm. *אָפֵּן*, to arise for a noise, *i. e.*, to arise to make a noise, just as *אָפֵּן*, to rise for judgment, means to rise to execute judgment (Ps. lxxv. 10); *אָפֵּן*, to rise for rest, is to rise to take rest (Ps. cxxii. 8); *אָפֵּן*, to rise for war, is to rise to wage war (Jer. xlix. 14). *אָפֵּן*, the Niphal of *אָפֵּן*, to be brought low, is they lower themselves, they descend (the reflexive being the primary signification of this conjugation, comp. Gesen. § 51, 2; Ewald, § 123, b), and forms a beautiful contrast to *אָפֵּן*, one class of birds rising, the other retiring. For the masculine *אָפֵּן*, instead of the feminine *אָפֵּן*, referring to the feminine noun *אָפֵּן*, see vii. 7. *אָפֵּן*, literally the daughters of song, denotes, according to a common idiom, songstresses (vide supra, x. 17), here singing birds, as is evident from the parallelism and the whole scope of the passage. In Syriac, too, *אָפֵּן*, is a singing bird (comp. Die Gabeln des Sophocles, herausgegeben von Julius Landsberger, S. 3). As this simple and natural construction, representing the commotion of the birds in

5 yea the people shall be frightened at that which is coming

anticipation of the storm, is fatal to the allegorical interpretation, which regards the whole description as "a portraiture of old age," the defenders of the allegory have been driven to force the most unnatural constructions upon this part of the verse. Thus the Hagadic explanation, as contained in the Talmud (*l. c.*), the Midrash, and the Chaldee, and followed by the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Syriac, St. Jerome, Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Luther, the Zurich Bible, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Auth. Version, and almost all modern critics, takes the aged man as the subject of *אָפֵּן*, and he shall rise, which St. Jerome explains FRIGESCENTE JAM SANGUINE, ET HUMORE SICCATO QUIBUS MATERIIS SOPOR ALITUR, AD LEVEM SONITUM EVIGILAT, NOCTISQUE MEDIO QUUM GALLUS CEGNERIT EXURGIT, NEQUAQUAM VALENS STRATO SEPIUS MEMBRA CONVERTERE, the blood now growing cold, and the moisture being dried up whereby sleep is nourished, he awakens at the slightest sound, and in the middle of the night when the cock crows he rises quickly, not being able frequently to turn his limbs in bed, and which is espoused by almost all the allegorisers of the present day. But against this interpretation is to be urged — 1. That though aged people may easily be awakened by a slight noise, yet they do not rise up at the sound of a bird; if simple awaking were intended, Coheleth would undoubtedly have used *אָפֵּן* and not *אָפֵּן*. Ewald, Hitzig, Stuart, and Philippon saw this, but, adhering to the allegory, were constrained to resort to a still more unnatural explanation, and to refer *אָפֵּן* to the voice of a sparrow, which is against the parallelism, and contrary to the expression *אָפֵּן*, rises, inasmuch as it is preposterous to characterise the greater noise of the mill, when reduced to that of a sparrow, as rising, and

which would have been conveyed to us without *אָפֵּן*, viz., *אָפֵּן*, when the noise of the mill is lowered to the voice of a bird. 2. The plural *אָפֵּן* in the following verse shews that *אָפֵּן*, the singular, and the plural *אָפֵּן*, do not refer to the same subject, the aged man; and, 3. That it is contradicted by the following clause, where *אָפֵּן*, which answers to *אָפֵּן* in the first clause, is the subject. But, apart from the violence done to the text, the deathblow to the allegory is the fact that it falls through in this clause, and that its defenders are obliged to give to the passage before us a literal interpretation, viz., that the voice of the bird is literally the voice of the bird, and that rising means rising up; whilst the immediately following clause is again explained allegorically, and the words *אָפֵּן* are made to signify music and songs shall be a bore to him (Talmud, *l. c.*); the lips shall relax, so that he shall not be able to sing (the Chaldee); his ears shall be heavy (St. Jerome, Grotius, Bishop Patrick); he shall despise all singers and songstresses (Rashi, Rashbam, &c.); his throat shall be disabled (Ibn Ezra); all the organs employed in the production and enjoyment of music are rendered powerless to afford delight (Dr. Smith, Holden, &c.); all song-singing is low (Hitzig, Stuart, &c.).

5. Yea the people shall be frightened, &c. All this consternation will arise from the dread which people shall have of the awful storm gathering over their heads, and of the terrors which are on their way. *אָפֵּן*, as frequently, is used by way of emphasis, and can hardly be translated; the nearest approach to it is our word *yea* (comp. Gesen. Lex. s. v.). *אָפֵּן*, the height, because there storms gather. For *אָפֵּן*, the third person plural used impersonally, see i. 10. *אָפֵּן* is not an adjective (Gesenius, Lex. s. v.; Herzfeld, &c.), as this is contrary to the analogous form *אָפֵּן*, but is a noun (see Ewald, § 153, b), from *אָפֵּן*, to

from on high, and at the terrors which are on their way; and the almond shall be despised, and the locust shall be loathed,

fear, denoting fear, terror, and is dependent upon the verb יָרָא; the ק from קָנָה, is to be mentally supplied before it. Here, again, most commentators have been compelled to abandon the allegory, and take it as referring to the incapacity of aged people to ascend high places, owing to weakness, shortness of sight and breath, and to the timidity of old people to walk in public ways, arising either from apprehension lest anything should happen to them, or from the weakness of their limbs; so the Talmud (l. c.), St. Jerome, Bishop Reynolds, Holden, Knobel; or, as Ibn Ezra will have it, מִחֲשׁוֹנֵי סְדֵרוֹ חֲשָׁבָה, he shall be afraid of his thoughts, which dwell upon the fact that his spirit will soon depart and go to the high heaven.

And the almond, &c. In the midst of such a confusing and terrifying scene the most delicate and inviting fruit will have no charm, but only create disgust and be left untouched. It is well known that the delicious almond is a highly prized fruit in the East, and great indeed must be the consternation of an Oriental which makes him disgusted with this delicacy. אֲמֵץ, a contraction of the apocopated אֲמֵץ, from אֲמֵץ (compare Gesen. § 73, 2, Rem. 4) is, as Ibn Ezra has already remarked, from אֲמֵץ, to deride, to despise, to disgust, and in the Hiphil signifies causes disgust; so also the Zurich Bible, Coverdale, Michaelis, Desvieux, Hodgson, Gesenius, Knobel, De Wette, Herzfeld, Noyes, Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, &c. The rendering, and the almond tree shall blossom (the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Syriac, Rashi, Rashbam, Luther, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, and many modern commentators), deriving it from אֲמֵץ or אֲמֵץ, to flourish, has entirely arisen from the allegorical interpretation, and is contrary to the form of the word, as אֲמֵץ for אֲמֵץ has no

parallel in Hebrew. Besides, the predicates of the other two nouns, which express the inability to enjoy that which has been highly esteemed, as well as the scope of the passage, are utterly at variance with this

derivation. The Syriac, ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܬܐ,

ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܬܐ,

and the watch shall rush upon him, and the almond shall flourish, doubly translates אֲמֵץ אֲמֵץ, taking אֲמֵץ from אֲמֵץ in the twofold sense of to fly, rush, i. q., נִס, and to flourish, and assigning to אֲמֵץ, from אֲמֵץ, to watch (comp. Ps. cxxvii. 1; Jer. v. 6; Ezra viii. 20), the meaning of watch, keeper (so also Symmachus, according to St. Jerome and Ibn Ezra), as well as of almond. As for the allegorical meaning of this clause, we are told that it denotes the haunch bone shall come out from leanness (the Talmud, (l. c.) the Chaldee, Rashi, Rashbam, &c.), the hoary hair which comes quickly upon a man, just as the almond tree thrusts out her blossoms before any other trees (Bishop Reynolds, Mendelssohn, &c.) Others, again, mentioned by Ibn Ezra and Salomon ben Melech, affirm that אֲמֵץ is אֲמֵץ אֲמֵץ אֲמֵץ, membrum gentile, and translate it reprobabitur coitus, which is followed by Dr. Mead (Medica Sacra, p. 44), Desvieux, Hitzig, and Fürst. We shall give the words of the latter in the original, as we forbear translating them. אֲמֵץ, ist die Eichel, glans virilis, was die süßbare Lust in dem Zeugungsgeſchäft darstellen soll, so daß auch אֲמֵץ אֲמֵץ, und die (männliche) Eichel verschmähel (die dargebotene Lust) überſetzt werden kann; daß die eigenthümliche Schreibung, um Bist u. Abbiß zugleich zu bezeichnen. But let those who are shocked with this explanation remember that, if it be once conceded that we have here an allegory, the defenders of this obscene

and the caper-berry shall be powerless; for man goeth to

exposition have as much right to maintain this to be its meaning, as those have who make the text declare a host of other most far-fetched and diametrically opposite things.

And the locust, &c. This locust (אַרְבֵּעַ) is one of the four kinds which the Jews were permitted by the Law to eat (comp. Levit. xi. 22). Locusts have been from all antiquity, and still are to the present day, very agreeable, wholesome, and nutritious food both in the East and in other countries. They are prepared in different ways; either boiled in salt water, head, feet, and wings taken off, and dried in the sun, or ground into flour and made into bread. We are told in the Talmud (Aboda Sara, 39, b) that after wine was poured upon them they were put into baskets and formed an extensive article of commerce. Diodorus Siculus says that a people of Ethiopia were called *Æridophagi, eaters of locusts*, because they were so fond of them (xxiv. 3), and Aristotle describes them as *delicacies* (Hist. Anim. v. 30). Modern travellers, too, testify to the agreeableness of this food. Dr. Shaw observes, that when the locusts are sprinkled with salt and fried, they are not unlike in taste to our fresh water cray-fish; and Russell says, "the Arabs salt them and eat them as a delicacy" (compare Harmer, Observations, ii. p. 58; Kitto, Cyclop. Bib. Lit.; Biner, Realwörterbuch; Levysohn, Die Zoologie des Talmud, s. v.) This will suffice to shew that the locust is mentioned in conjunction with the almond as a delicate viand. אֲמֵץ, the Hithpael of אֲמֵץ, to bear a heavy burden, signifies to make itself a burden, to become burdensome, loathsome. According to the Hagadic interpretation, אֲמֵץ, to become a burden, signifies to become big either with fat or swelling, and the meaning of the passage is אֲמֵץ אֲמֵץ אֲמֵץ, and the ankles of the feet shall be swelled (the Chaldee); so also St. Jerome, *senum crura tumescunt, et*

podagræ tumoribus pregravata, referring it to the swelled legs of old men, oppressed with the swellings of the gout. Hence the renderings of the Septuagint, καὶ ὡς ὁ ἀρθρὸς ἡ ἀγκυ, and the locust shall be mule foot, the Vulgate *impinguitur locusta*, the Syriac

ܕܥܡܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܬܐ, and others. Then, again, we are assured that it signifies the stomach, swelled with undigested humours (De Lyra, Le Clerc, &c.); it denotes the shoulders, hips, and back, all bunching out (Bishop Patrick, &c.); it means the dry, shrunk, shrivelled, crumpling, scraggy old man (Dr. Smith, Holden, Vaihinger, &c.); it is the powers hostile to life which destroy it in old age (Hengstenberg). Then, again, Rashi, Rashbam, and the commentators mentioned by Ibn Ezra, who are followed by Dr. Mead, Desvieux, Hitzig, and Fürst, maintain that it means חֲשׁוֹנֵי סְדֵרוֹ שִׁכְשְׁכוּ לְמַסָּה or כִּי הָיָה בָּם בְּמִקְוֵה, und lästigt ihn der Schlaf, als Bezeichnung des männl. Gliedes.

And the caper-berry, &c. The caper-plant belongs to a tribe of plants, the species of which grow abundantly in Asia, Africa, and Southern Europe, out of the crevices of walls, in the rubbish of ruins, and in barren places, producing a striking effect, as it is a showy and ornamental plant. "It forms a much-branched, diffuse shrub, which annually loses its leaves. The branches are long and trailing; smooth, but armed with double curved stipular spines. The leaves are alternate, roundish or oblong-oval, a little fleshy, smooth, of a green colour, but sometimes a little reddish. The flowers are large and showy, produced singly in the axils of the leaves, on stalks which are larger than the leaves. The calyx is four-leaved, coriaceous; the petals are also four in number, white, and of an oval roundish form. The stamens are very numerous and long, and their filaments being tinged with purple, and terminated by the yellow anthers,

his eternal home, and the mourners walk about the street :

give the flower a very agreeable appearance. The ovary is borne upon a straight stalk, which is a little longer than the stamens, and which, as it ripens, droops and forms an oval or pear-shaped berry, enclosing within its pulp numerous small seeds." Almost every part of this shrub has been used by the ancients as a condiment. The stalk and the seed were salted or preserved in vinegar or wine, and the buds or unexpanded flowers are esteemed at our tables as a pickle or sauce of a delicate flavour. The berries possess some irritant properties, and were taken as a provocative of appetite (comp. Kitto, Cyclop. Bib. Lit. under *Ahiyonah*; *Winer, Realwörterbuch*, s. v. *Rapper*). Hence the caper-berry was called *אֶבְיָה*, from *אָבָה*, to desire; for the form, see Ewald, § 163, e), literally *desire, appetite*, and metonymically that which creates desire or appetite, *incentive, stimulant*. The mention of the caper-berry is exceedingly striking. Having stated that all desire for food, however tempting, shall vanish in this awful scene, Coheleth says that even the caper-berry, with all its provocative properties, will fail to excite appetite. That *אֶבְיָה*, which in Biblical Hebrew only occurs here, means the *caper-berry*, and *קָפַר*, the *covering* or *peel* of the fruit of *צִקְרָה*, the *caper-shrub*, is evident from the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Syriac, St. Jerome, and the uniform signification of it in the Talmud (comp. Berachoth, 30, a; Buxtorf, Lex. Rabb. et Talm., pp. 12, 2008). Moreover, the parallels *פֶּשֶׁר וְפֶשֶׁר* show, beyond doubt, that it is a *fruit*. Hence Gesenius, Knobel, Ewald, De Wette, Noyes, Heiligstedt, Hitzig, Stuart, Fürst, Elster, Vaihinger, &c., rightly defend the signification of *caper-berry*, though their untenable explanation of the whole passage has led them wrongly to restrict it to a provocative *ad appetitum rei venera, ad irritandam venerem*. *קָפַר*, Hiphil of

קָפַר, to break, to abolish, signifies to cause its power to cease, i. e., to produce no effect, to be powerless. The

Syriac *ܐܒܝܗܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ*

ܐܒܝܗܐ, and the caper shall burst, and desire shall cease, also translates *אֶבְיָה וְקָפַר* doubly, taking *קָפַר* both for *breaking, bursting*, and *destroying, ceasing*, and *אֶבְיָה* for *caper*, and *want* = *אֶבְיָה*. Here again all the allegorisers have been obliged to drop the allegory, except Rosenmüller, who says, "the veteran who has reached the end of his days, and daily must expect to sink into his grave, is compared to such an over-ripe caper-berry, which is nearly falling off" (Biblical Mineralogy and Botany, Clark's edition, p. 107, &c.) Döderlein's rendering of this clause, da das Turteltaubens Klagegeßeln verſchmäh't wird, when the plaintive notes of the turtle-dove are despised, which is followed by Schmidt, deriving *אֶבְיָה* from *אָבָה*, *dove*, and *אֶבְיָה* *ahl* is as curious as it is preposterous.

For man goeth, &c. The cause of all this is, that death is on his way to seize his victim, and the professional mourners, who are hired to bemoan the departed, like sharks, are seen to follow closely at the heels of death, impatiently preparing themselves for the employment, before the sufferer has breathed his last. *וְיָ* is *causal*, giving the cause of this consternation. The participle *הֹלֵךְ* expresses the *approaching future*, i. e., *he is about to go*, or *is in the act of going* (comp. Gen. xvii. 19, xviii. 18, xix. 13; Gesenius, § 134, 2; Ewald, § 335, b). *בֵּית עוֹלָם*, the *house of eternity*, i. e., *eternal or everlasting house or home*, is the common expression in later Hebrew for the *grave* or *graveyard*, and the Jews use it to the present day. The same phrase exists in the Chaldee, and the Targum which takes *בֵּית עוֹלָם* (Isa. xlii. 11) as referring to the inhabitants of the grave, renders it *בֵּית עוֹלָם*.

6 before the silver cord goeth asunder, and the golden bowl

בְּיָמֵי מוֹתוֹ, the dead shall praise thee when they shall quit their eternal homes. It also occurs in Tobit iii. 6, "command that I may be delivered from this distress (*אל תרע נפשי מן הצרה*) into the everlasting place. Knobel's assertion, ewig Wohnung nennt Coheleth das Grab, weil er keine Befreiung daraus annimmt, that Coheleth calls the grave the everlasting abode, because he did not believe in a liberation therefrom, is both contrary to the design of the book and to fact. Had this phrase been used in the early portions of the Old Testament such an assertion would have some force; but, as it is, *בֵּית עוֹלָם* originated at a time when the belief in a resurrection was general, so much so that it became the great question of the day; and the above-quoted passage from the Chaldee shews that the paraphrast used it not weil er keine Befreiung daraus annimmt, because he did not believe in a liberation therefrom, but in connection with a liberation from the grave. The true explanation is given by Ibn Ezra, who remarks, והוא הבית שידורם לעולם יש עולם קצון כמו וישב שם עד עולם ועברו לעולם, *his everlasting home means the grave, for it is the abode where man dwells everlastingly. The word "everlasting," however, must here be taken in a restricted sense, just as in the phrases "he shall abide everlastingly" (1 Sam. i. 22), and "he shall serve him everlastingly" (Exod. xxi. 6, &c.)* The Syriac's rendering of *בֵּית עוֹלָם* by

ܒܝܬ ܕܥܠܡܐ, his house of labour, changes *עוֹלָם* into *עֲמַל*, by transposing the *ל* and *מ* according to the Hagadic rules of interpretation (vide supra, p. 31); thus giving a reason why *all want shall cease*, as its rendering of *אֶבְיָה וְקָפַר* in the preceding clause; it is because man goes to his place of labour, whence all his wants will be supplied. The phrase *בֵּית עוֹלָם, walking up and down, or going about the street*, characteristically describes

these (*סֹקְרִים*) mercenary mourners (comp. Jer. ix. 17; Mishna, Moed Katon, iii. 8; Joseph. De Bell. Jud. iii. 9, 5; Kitto, Cyclop. Bib. Lit., under *mourning*; *Winer, Realwörterbuch*, s. v. *Leiden*) who loiter about the house before the sufferer has expired, anxiously waiting to be employed. This accounts for the participle *הֹלֵךְ* being used with *הָאִישׁ*, *man is about to die, is in the act of dying*, whilst the *praterite* *סָבַר* is used with *הַסֹּקְרִים*, the mourners already go or loiter about (*בֵּית עוֹלָם*) in the street, not after the funeral.

6. *Before the silver cord, &c.* Having described the approach of death, Coheleth now passes on to its arrival. To impress upon our minds more deeply the awfulness of that encounter, and the necessity of remembering the Creator before death strikes the final blow, the sacred writer describes the dissolution of man under two different metaphors. In the first part of the verse the breaking up of the human machine and extinction of life are compared to the snapping asunder of the silver cord by which a burning lamp is suspended from the ceiling, dashing into pieces the golden reservoir of oil which imparts the vital fluid to the branches where the wicks are placed, and extinguishing the light. *עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא*, before, is used for the third time in this description, and, as in the two former instances, marks a new period; it indicates here the transition from the approach of death to its arrival, and is depending upon *זָכֵר אֶת בְּרֹאשְׁךָ וְגו'*, remember thy Creator, &c., in the first verse. *וְרָקַע*, to go asunder, to snap, beautifully describes the separating of the strands. The reading *וְרָקַע* proposed by the Massorites, which is found in twenty-one of Kennicott's MSS., and perhaps five more, and is adopted by Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Spohn, &c., is both unnecessary and untenable, because — 1. A Niphal of *וְרָקַע* nowhere occurs; 2. Even if this conjugation be admitted,

the Niphal of *קָרַן*, to bind, to chain, can never mean to be unbound, unchained; and 3. The verb *קָרַן* in the corresponding clause shews beyond a doubt that *קָרַן* is the proper reading. For the last mentioned reason, as well as for all want of authority, we must reject the reading *קָרַן*, suggested by Pfannkuche, Herzfeld, Gesenius, &c., or *קָרַן*, as Hitzig will have it, who is followed by Stuart, transposing the letters *ר* and *ק*. We must add that the vowel-points of *קָרַן* belong to *קָרַן* in the *Keri*, and that the proper reading is *קָרַן*, as the vowels of the Ketib always belong in such cases to the marginal reading. *קָרַן הַכֶּסֶּךְ*, the cord of silver, i.e., the cord composed of silvered strands for the sake of ornament; just as we have the chains silvered or gilt by which our chandeliers are suspended. As the derivation of *קָרַן* from *קָרַן*, to break (the Septuagint, Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, the Zurich Bible, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Authorised Version, Hodgson, Knobel, Gesenius, De Wette, Ewald, Noyes, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, Vaibinger, &c.), creates two inadmissible anomalies, making, in the first place, *קָרַן*, the regular future of *קָרַן*, the abnormal future of *קָרַן*, thus mixing up the verbs *קָרַן* and *קָרַן*, which are always distinct both in form and sense (Isa. xlii. 4 not excepted, see Hengstenberg, *Christology, in loco*); and secondly, assigning to *קָרַן*, which invariably signifies to break, an intransitive meaning, to be broken; it is better to regard it as the regular future of *קָרַן*, to run (the Vulgate, Luther, Desvoeux, Hengstenberg, &c.), to escape. The idea of escaping forms an excellent parallelism with *קָרַן*, to go asunder, just as *קָרַן*, to be broken, and *קָרַן*, to be dashed, correspond to each other in the second part of this verse, and preserves the evenness of the construction. *קָרַן* (from *קָרַן*, to roll on, to swell), properly that which sends forth water, a spring, a fountain (Josh. xv. 19; Judg. i. 15), a reservoir or bowl of oil, which sends

forth the oil into the branches containing the wicks. Hence the wick is called *קָרַן*, the drawer (Mishna, Sabbath, xxix. 9). Gesenius' remark, that it is so called from its round form (Lex. s.v.) is rightly rejected by Herzfeld, on the ground that an oil vessel is not necessarily round, and that it may assume any shape. The renderings of the Septuagint, *ἀνθρακω, flower*, and the Vulgate, *vitta, fillet*, are both contrary to the signification of *קָרַן*, and at variance with the context. Hitzig, Stuart, and others take *קָרַן* to mean oil which is of a golden colour, and appeal to Zech. iv. 12 in corroboration of this explanation. But though it is true that *קָרַן* is tropically used in the passage alluded to, yet, as the genitive *קָרַן הַכֶּסֶּךְ*, silver, connected with *קָרַן*, cord, is used in the former clause to describe the material, consistency demands that the genitive *קָרַן הַכֶּסֶּךְ*, gold, connected with *קָרַן*, bowl, in the corresponding clause, should also be taken as descriptive of the material. Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Bishop Reynolds, Desvoeux (p. 193), Mendelssohn, Holden, Preston, and others, take the imagery here as part of that contained in the remainder of this verse, and maintain that the whole verse alludes to a water apparatus, viz., the cord or line (*קָרַן*), the cistern (*קָרַן*) into which the water is emptied, the bucket or pail (*קָרַן*) in which the water is brought up, and the wheel (*קָרַן*) by which it is got up. But against this is to be urged—1. That *קָרַן* never means cistern; 2. That the adjectives silver and gold are most inappropriate to a water apparatus; and 3. That the marked distinction drawn between this part of the verse and the following, by the use of adjectives here, and the entire absence of them in the next hemistich, indicates most clearly that two distinct metaphors are intended. As to the allegorical meaning of this clause, we are told that “the silver cord and golden bowl” mean the tongue and the skull of the head (the Chaldee), *SPINA DORSI, the backbone*

escapeth, or the bucket breaketh upon the fountain, and the wheel is shattered at the well, and the body returneth to

or the marrow of it, and *PIA MATER, the brain* (Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Dr. Smith, Bishop Patrick, Clarke, Holden, &c.), “the urine, whose stream resembles a silver thread, which is then broken, when it distils by drops, as it frequently doth in old men” (Gasper Sanctius, quoted by Bishop Patrick, *in loco*).

Or the bucket, &c. The second metaphor, under which the breaking up of the human machine is described, is taken from the working of a well. One of the methods most employed for drawing up water from wells or reservoirs is a wheel, which has a line and a bucket appended to it, and is turned by a man or an ox. Robinson, in his description of the water apparatus he saw, says that “a platform of very large stones was built up around the well, and there were many drinking troughs. On the platform was fixed a small reel for the rope, which a man, seated on a level with the axis, wound up by pulling the upper part of the reel towards him with his hands, while he at the same time pushed the lower part from him with the feet” (Palestine, ii. 22). And just as when the bucket or wheel is broken, the machine is incapable of service and useless, so man may be unable to draw comforts from the remembrance of the Creator, when the inroads of death have shattered his frame and impaired his faculties. Just as two verbs were used in the first part of this verse, *קָרַן* and *קָרַן*, which denote separation, departure, so there are two verbs employed in this clause, *קָרַן* and *קָרַן*, which signify to break, to dash in pieces. The Septuagint's rendering of *קָרַן* by *καὶ συντρέχουσιν*, and shall run together, arises from confounding it with *קָרַן*, which immediately precedes it. The two prepositions *בְּ* and *בְּ*, are not promiscuously used for *at* (the Sept., the Vulgate, the Syriac, Luther, the

Geneva Bible, the Auth. Version, Hodgson, Herzfeld, De Wette, Noyes, Hitzig, Stuart, Hengstenberg, &c.), but are designedly employed to describe the different positions occupied by the subjects with which they are respectively connected; the bucket (*קָרַן*) generally stands upon the enclosure of the well, thus being, as it were, over or above it, hence it is *עַל הַקָּבֹעֵץ*, whilst the wheel (*קָרַן*) is contiguous or joined to it, hence *אֶל הַקָּבֹעֵץ*. Hence the Zurich Bible, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, Knobel, Heiligstedt, Elster, Vaibinger, &c., rightly translate the former upon, and the latter at. The reading *אֶל*, which is to be found in twenty-one of Kennicott's MSS., is plainly a mistake. According to the allegorisers, “the bucket being broken over the fountain” means the gall at the liver being broken (the Chaldee, Ibn Ezra, &c.), the veins at the right ventricle of the heart shall cease to act (Dr. Smith, Bishop Patrick, Dr. Gill, &c.), the individual and general life shall terminate, when the drawing of water-breath ceases (Hengstenberg, &c.)

7. And the body, &c. We are to remember the Creator, and strive to do his will before he summons us, through death, to the bar of judgment. The *וְ* in *וְהָיָה* is not causal, assigning a reason for what has hitherto been said (Luther, &c.); nor is it then, introducing the *apodosis* (the Bishops' Bible, the Authorised Version, Stuart, &c.); nor does it denote or, or ever (the Zurich Bible, Coverdale, Hodgson, Spohn, &c.); but it is the regular *copula* (the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Geneva Bible, Knobel, De Wette, Noyes, &c.) Instead of the normal future *וְהָיָה*, the apocopated form *וְהָיָה* is used, to make it conform in vowel-points to *וְהָיָה* in the preceding verse. Such instances of uniformity, being deemed an ornament in the style, were frequently effected at the expense of altering

the earth as it was, and the spirit goeth back to God who gave it.

regular forms (comp. כִּנְיָ, *entrance*, instead of כִּנְיָ, to correspond with כִּנְיָ, Ezek. xliii. 11; כִּנְיָ instead of כִּנְיָ, to correspond with כִּנְיָ, Song of Songs iii. 11; see also *infra*, verse 11, and Gesen. § 59, Rem. 3; Ewald, § 118, d). כִּנְיָ, *dust*, is metonymically used for the *lifeless body*, because it is formed of dust, Gen. ii. 7, iii. 19 (comp. כִּנְיָ, *shall the corpse praise thee?* Ps. xxx. 10); hence the Chaldee has appropriately paraphrased it כִּנְיָ כִּנְיָ, *thy flesh, or body, which was formed of dust*. Most commentators take כִּנְיָ, again, as synonymous with כִּנְיָ, and appeal to the phrases כִּנְיָ כִּנְיָ and כִּנְיָ כִּנְיָ, in Gen. iii. 19 and Ps. civ. 29, to corroborate this explanation. But the very fact that Coheleth deviates here from the well-known phrases which he himself has used elsewhere (iii. 20), shews that he intends to convey thereby a different shade of meaning, which is here called forth by his speaking of the *spirit* as well as of the *body*; whilst, in the passages alluded to, the *body only* is mentioned. As Coheleth tells us in the next clause that the spirit goes to God, ascending, as it were, on high (*vide* iii. 21), the body is beautifully contrasted therewith, by being described as *thrown upon (כִּנְיָ) the earth*. The Septuagint (ἐπὶ . . . γῆς), the Syriac, the Chaldee, &c., have therefore rightly distinguished between כִּנְיָ and כִּנְיָ in this verse. כִּנְיָ, *as it (i. e., the body) was*, that is to say, prior to its animation; the body shall go back to remain upon the earth in the state wherein it was before the soul occupied it, hence *lifeless*.

And the spirit, &c. Le Clerc tells us that by the returning of the spirit to God is meant its *reabsorption into God, the original principle from which it was torn off, just as the body turns into earth again, becomes amalgamated with the earth, the original*

element from which it was taken, AT-QUI UT CORPUS REVERSUM IN TERRAM DESINIT ESSE CORPUS HUMANUM, ET DISSOLVITUR; ITA SPIRITUS, REDIENS AD DEUM EAM PATI MUTATIONEM, CREDERE POTUIT SALOMO, QUA DESINEBAT ESSE SPIRITUS HUMANUS, thus making the passage to enunciate the doctrine of the theistical philosophers of Greece, who denied the future *personality* of the soul, and held the refusion of it into the *τὴν ἰν*, or the ANIMA MUNDI, the *world-soul*; he quotes, in illustration of our verse, the parallel words of Epicharmus, Συναριθοὶ καὶ διαριθοὶ, καὶ ἀπριθοὶ ὄντι ἡδὲ πάλιν γὰρ ἐς γῆν, αὐτῶμα δ' αὖτε, *they were huddled together, and they were separated, and they returned again to the place whence they came; the earth in earth, the spirit above; and Euripides—*

Ἔσχατ' ἦδη γῇ καλυφθῆναι νεκρούς,
Ὅθεν δ' ἔκαστος ἐς τὸ φῶς ἀφικέται,
Ἐνταῦθ' ἀπαλειν, αὐτῶμα μὲν ὄντι αἰθῆρα,
τὸ σῶμα δ' ἐς γῆν· οὗτι γὰρ νεκτῆμεθα.
ἤμῃ-τινον αὐτό, πλὴν ἰνυκῆσαι μόνον
Κάπειτα τὴν θρίψασαν αὐτὸ δαῖ λαβεῖν.

Let the corpses be buried in the earth,
Whence each part comes into existence;
thither
They return, the spirit to the ether,
And the body to the earth. Not as our own
Do we hold it, but only as a sojourner, and
in fief.
The mother which nourishes it must receive
it back.

This interpretation is followed by Warburton (Divine Legation, lib. v. § 6), Knobel, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Noyes, &c., who also quote Lucretius—

Cedit item retro, de terra quod fuit ante,
In terras; et, quod missum est ex ætheris oris,
Id rursum cœli relictum templa recipient.

"Thus all things rise, thus all again return:
Earth takes what earth bestowed; and back
to heaven
Remount the ethereal dews from heaven
that fell."—DE NAT. RER. II. 998, &c.

But we submit that this doctrine is thoroughly heathenish, and, though largely believed by the Greeks and

Romans, is utterly at variance with the tenor of the Bible, as well as with the usage of the same language in other parts of this book. 1. The fact that God is uniformly described throughout the Bible as a *personal* and *super-mundane* Being, separated from, independent of, and infinitely above all matter—to the ignorance or denial of which, on the part of the Heathen philosophers, the emanation-theory in question is to be ascribed—is utterly subversive of the said absorption of the human spirit into the world-soul. 2. Nothing can be more plain than the description which the Bible gives of the radical and essential difference between the Creator and the creature, and which the sacred writer of this book repeatedly sets forth. To make therefore a Hebrew writer, who believes in this essential difference between the ontological natures of God and man, enunciate the amalgamation of the human spirit with the Godhead, is most unjustifiable. 3. The abhorrence of sin, and the approbation of holiness, manifested throughout the Scriptures, the curse denounced against the sinner (Dent. xxvii. 26), stamping the polluted soul with a *character indelibilis*, precludes the possibility of a Hebrew writer teaching that this awful distinction will at once and for ever be destroyed, as soon as man dies and the guilt-laden soul is absorbed in a holy Deity, who hates iniquity and sin. 4. We said that this explanation is also at variance with the same phraseology used by Coheleth elsewhere. It is admitted by all parties that the words כִּנְיָ לְקָדְשׁ, *the spirit going upwards, i. e., to heaven*, in iii. 21, mean *immortality*, just as the contrary phrase כִּנְיָ לְקָדְשׁ, *the spirit going downwards to the earth*, denotes *mortality*; and those especially who are anxious to shew that Coheleth denies the immortality of the soul triumphantly appeal to this

very phrase. Now we submit that the phrases *the spirit going upwards to heaven*, and *the spirit returning to God, i. e., to heaven*, the habitation of God, are essentially the same; and, if the former means *immortality of the soul*, it is an outrage to the laws of language to deny the meaning to the latter. 5. Finally, this reabsorption-theory makes the sacred writer utter the greatest nonsense imaginable. Coheleth started with the problems and mysteries in the moral government of God, wherein the god-fearing are allowed to suffer and the godless to prosper, and the comfort he has now to give to these afflicted saints, as well as the admonition to all, is, "Remember thy Creator, fear the Lord, keep his commandments, begin it in early life, before decrepit old age sets in and deprives you of your powers, and before your spirit, in common with all other spirits, the sin-polluted and the pure, is merged in the world-soul!" What a solution of the grand problem! What a comfort to the afflicted saints! what a reason to fear God! what an inducement to do good! But how apposite, how solemn, how consoling is the obvious interpretation; we are to fear God in spite of the seeming incongruities in his present moral government; we are to keep his commandments, beginning in early life, whilst we are able to do it, before old age creeps upon us and impairs our faculties, and death summons our souls before the tribunal of the Creator, when it will be too LATE! Then every deed done in the body shall be judged, every mystery explained, and every wrong redressed. This, then, is the momentous and all-important conclusion to which Coheleth brings us, after having led us through the various perplexities and conflicts of this world to the sure and certain hope of victory in the world to come.

THE EPILOGUE.

CHAPTER XII. 8—14.

Thus all human efforts to obtain real happiness are vain (xii. 8); this is the experience of the wisest and most painstaking Coheleth (9, 10); the Sacred Writings alone are the way to it (11, 12); there is a righteous Judge who marks, and will, in the great day of judgment, judge, everything we do; we must therefore fear him, and keep his commandments (13, 14).

8, 9 Vanity of vanities, saith Coheleth; all is vanity! And

8. *Vanity of vanities, &c.* Having concluded his demonstration that all human efforts to adjust the destinies of man are vain, and that the righteous Judge will in the great day of judgment rectify all, by rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked, Coheleth resumes, in this Epilogue, the scope of his argument, beginning with the very words of the Prologue. Ibn Ezra, Luther, the Zurich Bible, Coverdale, Spohn, De Wette, Knobel, Rosenmüller, Ewald, Herzfeld, Noyes, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Philippon, Elster, &c., connect this verse with the preceding section. But against this is to be urged—1. That this formula is never used at the end of a sentence or section, as may be seen from the eighteen passages where the declaration of vanity is made; 2. That the only other place where this full formula occurs is at the beginning of the prologue, and it is therefore most natural that it should be also at the beginning of the epilogue; 3. That the doctrine of immortality and a future judgment, when all that is now conflicting shall be rectified, wherewith Coheleth concluded in the preceding verse, cannot be characterised as *utter vanity*; and 4. That the following verse, which begins with a *copula*, shews that this verse belongs to it. As to the assertion that verses 9–14 are not genuine, and have been added by a later hand

(Döderlein, Schmidt, Berthold, Umbreit, Knobel, &c.), it is most arbitrary, and to be repudiated. Nothing can be more weak than the arguments brought to support this allegation. We shall examine them in the same order as they are advanced by Knobel—

1. "The whole addition is superfluous, and altogether without an object in such a book as Coheleth. It is incomprehensible why the writer, who pursued a purely didactic tendency in the composition of this book, should have added this unimportant notice. He began simply with the theme of the whole (i. 2), he concludes simply therewith (xii. 8), after having worked it out. No one expects anything else which might disturb the winding up of the whole." But we submit that the words "All is utter vanity," do not contain the theme of the book, and that nothing can be more appropriate, after having led us through all the intricacies of the argument, than to set forth, in a striking and solemn manner in this epilogue, the grand solution, to correspond to the prologue, which contains the great problem. So striking a prologue, without a correspondingly striking epilogue, would have left the book unfinished.

2. "Coheleth speaks in the *third person* in this supplement, whilst in the book itself, and in places where

he simply referred to himself, he used the *first person*. Let this not be objected to on the score that in the book he addresses himself to others as teaching and admonishing, and therefore speaks of himself appropriately in the first person, for he also does the same in the epilogue (verse 12), without, however, speaking in the first person. This difference of treatment can only be satisfactorily explained on the assumption that it proceeds from different authors." But this very fact, so far from being against its genuineness, corroborates it, inasmuch as it shews that the prologue and the epilogue proceed from the same hand, for both are in the *third person*. The cause of this is simple and obvious. Coheleth is represented as belonging to the *past* (vide p. 247), and the description of his *hare* problem and solution must necessarily be given in the *third person*; whereas the narrative of the various futile efforts to satisfy the cravings of his soul in any other way would have materially diminished its power if it had also been in the *third person*. To render the scene life-like and effectual, Coheleth is most beautifully represented as living, moving, and having his being in the midst of us.

3. "It must also be noticed that the epilogist urges the fear of God and piety as the end of all wisdom (ver. 13); but this Coheleth could hardly predicate of his wise lessons. It is true that he, too, recommends the fear of God; but this is by no means the sum of his wisdom, it is not the end to which his doctrine is directed. His tendency, on the contrary, is to shew that all is vanity, that it is therefore best cheerfully to enjoy life." But this objection is based on a false view of the design of the book.

4. "The notion of a future judgment, to be held strictly by God, which the epilogist propounds (verse 14) as the view of Coheleth, is equally against its genuineness." Nothing can be more preposterous than

this objection. A comparison of the proposition contained in the prologue with the sentiments expressed in the epilogue, will shew that it is the very conclusion which Coheleth was driving at, and that he, as a *god-fearing Jew*—not an atheistic or pantheistic heathen philosopher—could come to no other, starting, as he does, with that solemn proposition. We submit that, if Knobel and his fellow objectors to the genuineness of this epilogue had rightly understood the import of the prologue, they would never have made these gratuitous objections. Besides, the seventh verse of this very chapter, which is admitted to be genuine, propounds the immortality of the soul.

5. "Finally, the remark that the making of many books has no end (verse 12), can hardly proceed from the mouth of Coheleth, who most probably lived in the time of the Persians." But this is purely imaginary, as neither Knobel nor any one else can adduce any solid reason why this allusion to the existence of many books does not tally with that period. We know from Diodorus (i. 49) and others, that large libraries existed in Egypt and elsewhere, and we cannot suppose that the Jewish mind, which was highly cultivated, as is evident from the sublime poetry of the Old Testament, would be less active than the heathen. Besides, the large wreck of Midrashic literature we still possess—for time has destroyed this prodigious work—shews beyond doubt that the Hebrews were actively prosecuting the sciences and arts of the day. We have given Knobel's arguments verbatim, believing that, by looking at them in full, the reader will better perceive their feebleness. This is the only instance where ~~any~~ has the article, evidently to shew that *the* Coheleth who commenced the prologue with "Vanity of vanities!" is the identical one that concludes the epilogue with the same assertion, thus inseparably connecting the beginning with the end.

besides that Coheleth was a wise man, he also taught the people wisdom, and carefully and studiously composed many 10 parables. Coheleth sought to find words of comfort, and he

9. *And besides that, &c.* To give additional weight to the solemn doctrine repeated in this epilogue, Coheleth, in accordance with the custom of Eastern authors, mentions his fitness for undertaking this work, that he was a sage, a public teacher, and a profound author. One possessing such qualifications for investigation and passing judgment on things, ought therefore to elicit adequate attention and obedience from the reader (comp. i. 2). As *וְיָרָא* signifies 1. *That which remains* (1 Sam. xv. 15); 2. *Further*; 3. *More* (*vile supra*, ii. 15); and 4. *Besides* (Esth. vi. 6), Ewald, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, Fürst, Hengstenberg, &c. translate this clause *it remains* (i. e., to be said) *that Coheleth was a wise man, moreover he taught, &c.*, the Vulgate, Luther, the Auth. Version, Rosenmüller, Noyes, &c., and *moreover the Preacher was wise, he still taught, &c.*; the Geneva Bible, Mendelssohn, Boothroyd, Preston, &c., and *the more wise the Preacher was, the more he taught, &c.*; whilst Rashbam, Coverdale, Gesenius, Knobel, De Wette, Vaihinger, Philippson, &c., render it *and besides that Coheleth was wise, he also taught the people knowledge*; the latter rendering is to be preferred, because it needs not the harsh ellipsis of the first; it does not leave *וְ* to clog the sentence as the second does, and avoids the artificial construction of the third. The Hagadic explanation of this clause, as found in the Chaldee, *וְיָרָא כִּן כָּל בְּנֵי אָדָם וְהָאֵלֹהִים וְהָאֲנָשִׁים וְהָאֲנָשִׁים וְהָאֲנָשִׁים*, and *Solomon, who was called Coheleth, was abundantly wise above all the children of men*, construing the Hebrew *וְיָרָא* as *abundantly wise*, will account for the otherwise meaningless rendering of the Septuagint, *καὶ περισσὸν ὄντι ἐλπίσας ἡ λακτισμασθῆς σοφίᾳ*. Commentators are also divided as to the meaning of *וְיָרָא*, some deriving it from *וְיָרָא*, to hear,

render the Piel to give ear, to heed (Aquila, the Syriac, the Chaldee, Rashbam, Luther, Coverdale, the Auth. Version, Michaelis, Spohn, Hengstenberg, &c.); or *he made hear, he taught* (the Vulgate, Rashi, the Geneva Bible, Le Clerc, &c.); whilst others, deriving it from *וְיָרָא*, to weigh, translate the Piel to weigh well, to consider (Ibn Ganach, Gesenius, Knobel, De Wette, Rosenmüller, Herzfeld, Noyes, Heiligstedt, Hitzig, Stuart, Elster, Vaihinger, Philippson, &c.), which is more compatible with the immediately following *וְיָרָא*. The meaningless rendering of the Sept. *καὶ οὗς ἐξηκούσται λόγον παραβολῶν*, and *the ear found out ordinary parables*, taking *וְיָרָא* for *וְיָרָא*, is to be traced to Hagadic influence (comp. Talmud, Erubin, 21; Midrash Yalkut in loco). Herzfeld rightly remarks, that *וְיָרָא* have no object, and *וְיָרָא* has no copula, the two verbs are best taken adverbially, as qualifying *וְיָרָא*, which is of frequent occurrence (*vide supra*, viii. 3). For the adverbial use of *וְיָרָא* see i. 16. The Septuagint connects it with the following verse.

10. *Coheleth sought, &c.* The great labour and care which he bestowed upon the writing of the many parables mentioned in the foregoing verse, Coheleth tells us he did not diminish in composing this book. His supreme anxiety was to discover truth which should comfort and cheer the hearts of those who were perplexed with the mysteries of God's moral government and the destinies of man, and he frankly wrote down the words of truth. *וְיָרָא וְיָרָא*, words of comfort, does not stand in apposition to *וְיָרָא וְיָרָא*, words of truth, the former referring to *gracefulness of diction*, and the latter to *propriety of sentiments* (Mendelssohn, Michaelis, Holden, Rosenmüller, Umbreit, Herzfeld, Noyes, Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Philippson, Elster, &c.), as a graceful

11 wrote down frankly the words of truth. The words of the

style would be unworthy of such research and mentioning (*וְיָרָא וְיָרָא*) in so solemn a description, and would not be placed before the all-important object of the book; but is identical with *וְיָרָא וְיָרָא*, words of truth, according to the general rule of parallelisms in this book, and is therefore designated as words of delight (comp. Ps. xix. 10; Prov. viii. 6-10). Ibn Ezra's explanation of it by analogy is preposterous. *וְיָרָא*, the participle passive, like the infinitive, being preceded by a finite verb, has the distinction of that verb implied (comp. viii. 9); hence Aquila, the Vulgate, and the Syriac rightly render it *he wrote*, which led some erroneously to think that they read *וְיָרָא וְיָרָא* or *וְיָרָא וְיָרָא*. Hitzig's alteration of it into *וְיָרָא*, which is followed by Stuart, is simply arbitrary. The abstract *וְיָרָא*, *uprightness, frankness*, like *וְיָרָא*, *will- ingness* (Hos. xiv. 5), and other nouns, is used adverbially for *uprightly, frankly* (compare Ewald, § 279, c); the clause is well rendered by the

Syriac *ܐܡܪܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ*, and Luther *und er schrieb recht die Worte der Wahrheit*. The rendering of the Septuagint *καταμνησθῆναι τὸν λόγον*, which is followed by Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible (*right scripture*), the Geneva Bible (*upright writing*), &c., making it depend upon *וְיָרָא וְיָרָא*, is contrary to the word *וְיָרָא*, which never means *a writing*; this is expressed by *וְיָרָא*. The Vulgate, *SERMONES RECTISSIMOS AC VERITATE PLENOS, words most right and full of truth*, is utterly at variance with the words of the text; Rashbam's construction, *וְיָרָא וְיָרָא, words of uprightness and truth*, arbitrarily transposes *וְיָרָא* and *וְיָרָא*, and supplies the copula before the latter. Ibn Ezra's strange opinion that *וְיָרָא* is the name of a book, *Catub Jasher*, a commentary upon the book of *Jasher*, which is no more extant (*הוא ספר וכמוהו על הספר הישר ואינו מלא*) is only equalled by his explanation of the former clause. The Autho-

riser Version, and that which was written was upright, even words of truth, besides supplying most unwarrantably so many words, is extremely awkward. Desvoveux's translation, and one that could well write down this true discourse, which he explains, "Solomon took pains, not only to compose well, but likewise to have a good copyist" (pp. 231. 486), is most preposterous. It only remains to be added that the Syriac, though leaving *וְיָרָא* at the end of the foregoing verse, like the Septuagint, also begins this verse with *וְיָרָא*.

11. *The words of the wise, &c.* From his general abilities and productions (verse 9), and the labour bestowed upon this work especially (10), Coheleth, as is to be expected, passes on to the great object and original source of this treatise. And as this work is one of a large collection, all composed by different people, all having the same great end in view, though striking out various ways to reach it, and all being derived from the same fountain-head, the sacred writer shews, by a metaphor from pastoral life, how the employment of apparently opposite methods by the different writers of the sacred volume harmonises with the fact that they all derive their knowledge from one source, to effect one great result, viz., the happiness of man. Just as the goad and the stake, apparently opposite in their tendencies, the one driving onward to fresh pastures, the other keeping back to the old ones, are employed by the same shepherd to subserve one great object; so the words of the wise, which lead onward, propounding new things, and the words of the masters of the assemblies, which keep back to, and establish in the old things, proceed from one source, and have one common object in view. That Coheleth is comprised among (*וְיָרָא*), the wise here mentioned, whose words drive onward like goads, is evident from the fact

wise are like goads, and those of the masters of the assemblies are like fixed stakes, given by the same shepherd.

that he is characterised as (חָכָם) a wise man in verse 9. חָכָם, i. q., 1 Sam. xiii. 21, like חָכָם and חָכָם, is from חָכָם, to prick, with Dagesh line omitted (comp. חָכָם, Esth. viii. 6; Ezek. xl. 43; Gesen. § 21, 2, o; Ewald, § 163, d), and denotes a goad, commonly used by shepherds in the East to stimulate cattle to go on quickly, and hence is a striking metaphor to express what urges forward, and tends to the opening of new spheres. The figure is well explained by Ibn Ezra הקדמונים יש גורם שהם כרובות לבדוק שמסרים ומסידים רבים, among the words of the ancients there are some which are like goads to cattle, correcting and opening new things to the mind; so also Herzfeld, and substantially the same the Chaldee, Rashi, Rashbam, Holden, Knobel, Noyes, Vaihinger, Ewald, &c., who, however, fail by confining themselves exclusively to the idea of teaching, and ignoring that the principal object of the goad is to drive onward. The explanation of Gesenius, *aculeorum instar alte descendunt in pectora hominum isque manent infixæ* (Thesaurus, s. v.), taking the point of comparison to be the pricking, the vivid impression, which is followed by Hitzig, Heiligstedt, Stuart, Elster, &c., is totally at variance with the use of the goad, which is not to prick but to drive forward, the pricking being made subservient to this primary object.

And those of the masters, &c. The stakes here referred to play a most important part in nomadic life, inasmuch as they are the supporters and keepers of the shepherds' abodes. To them, when driven into the ground, is the tent fastened, to enable the workmen to spread it, and to them, also, are the cords tied by which the tent is extended. Hence a stake became a metaphor for one upon whom the care and maintenance of the state depended (Zech.

x. 4), and a firmly fixed stake is used for an immovably established position of such a state supporter (Isa. xxii. 23). It is therefore obvious, that when Coheleth compares the teachings of the masters of the assemblies to fixed stakes he thereby means that they propound firmly established notions; these masters are, as it were, conservatives, whilst the wise men are liberals. חָכָם, i. q., חָכָם, the ח and the כ, as frequently, being interchanged, is from חָכָם, to stand erect, to be pointed, to be sharp, and hence signifies a nail, a spike, a stake to fasten tents (comp. 2 Chron. iii. 9; Jer. x. 4), and, like its synonym חָכָם, is of common gender, which accounts for its being construed with the masculine חָכָם. It is moreover to be remarked that the feminine termination חָכָם is here designedly used instead of the masculine חָכָם, to correspond with חָכָם (comp. verse 7). That חָכָם here is not a nail driven into the wall, as some will have it, is evident from חָכָם, by which it is preceded, and חָכָם, which follows it, shewing that the whole is a pastoral scene occupied by tents, which have no walls to drive nails in. חָכָם, to stick in, is also used in Dan. xi. 45 for driving in tent-spikes. The subject חָכָם, which, according to a well-known omission, is not repeated, must be supplied before the genitive חָכָם, from the first clause. For an exactly parallel case, see x. 12, 13.

The Syriac ܡܫܬܪܬܐ, master of the thresholds, has evidently arisen from the carelessness of the transcriber, who has inadvertently inserted a ܡ after the ܬ.

Given by the same, &c. Though these teachings are apparently opposite in their tendencies, yet they are communicated by the same shepherd to his different servants, and conduce to one great object. חָכָם refers both

12 And beyond these, my son, beware! to make many books

to חָכָם, the words, and to חָכָם and חָכָם, the goad and stake, and is followed by חָכָם, which is not unfrequently taken by the efficient cause after a passive verb (comp. Gen. ix. 11; Job xxiv. 1; Song of Songs iii. 10; Gesen. § 143, 2; Ewald, § 295, c). חָכָם, shepherd, i. e., God, who alone imparts these different lessons of heavenly wisdom to his inspired servants. Very significant and emphatic is the expression חָכָם, the same (vide ii. 14), shewing the unity of the fountain-head from which all these various streams derive their existence. With this simple explanation, which leaves to every word its natural meaning, and violates no points or accents, we shall give some of the multifarious renderings, leaving the reader to decide which is the preferable translation. The Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Syriac translate it, "the words of the wise are as goads and as nails firmly fixed, which have been given by those of the counsel from one shepherd;" Luther renders it, *bieße Worte der Weisen sind Spieße und Nägel, geschriebe durch die Meister der Versammlungen, und von Einem Hirten gegeben, these words of the wise are spears and nails written by the masters of assemblies, and given by one shepherd*; the Zurich Bible has *dann weiser lüten wort sind als stäcke mit denen man stupffet, vnuß nagel die durchdringend, mit benenn [die menschen] jenen gehalten werdend, dann sy werdend von einem einigen hirtenn gegeben*, which is literally adopted by Coverdale, "for the words of the wise are like pricks and nails that go through, wherewith men are kept together; for they are given of one shepherd only;" the Bishops' Bible again has, "for the words of the wise are like pricks and nails that go through, of the authors of gatherings, [which] are given of one shepherd," remarking, in the margin, "authors of gatherings he calleth wise men," because they

gather the sayings of the wiser sort of men in their books." The Geneva Bible, which is followed by the Auth. Version, renders it, "the words of the wise are like goads and like nails fastened by the masters of the assemblies, which are given by one pastor;" according to Broughton it means, "the words of the wise, as goads and as nails fastened in the sheepfolds, being given from one shepherd;" according to Lightfoot (Works, ii. 575), it ought to be, "the words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by those that gather the flock into the fold, which are furnished by the chief shepherd;" and, according to Desvoeux, it means, "one shepherd gave the words of the wise like goads, and appointed the masters of collections, like planted repositories." Hodgson, again, with equal certainty, tells us that it means, "like goads or like points that pierce, are the sayings of the wise; the persons employed to collect them were appointed by none but the teacher;" whilst Mendelssohn, Friedländer, and Preston assure us that it ought to be rendered, "the words of the wise are like points of goads, and the sayings of the gatherers cleave to the soul like nails implanted, agreeing together as if they proceeded from one thinking mind."

12. And beyond these, &c. Having adverted, in the foregoing verse, to the variety and sufficiency of the teachings in the sacred writings, and to the Divine source from which they emanate, Coheleth now warns his readers against seeking satisfaction in profane books, the making and perusal of which will only yield endless trouble and pain; just as he found it by experience, when acquiring knowledge in order to fathom the mysteries of Providence, and to find repose for his soul (vide supra, i. 18). The importance of this caution, not to seek peace of mind in the multitude of books, will be more obvious if we bear in mind the arrogant

14 his commandments, for this every man should do; for God

son, Ewald, Herzfeld, Heiligstedt, Preston, Elster, Philippon, &c.), inasmuch as this phrase uniformly denotes *all men, every man*, nor *since for this are all men*, the ל being supplied before ה (Rashi); nor *this belongeth to, is for, every man*, supplying ל before ה (Geier, Le Clerc, Holden, &c.), which requires too hard and unwarrantable an ellipsis, but *this every man should do*; וְכָל אִישׁ is to be taken over to it, in accordance with a well-established fact, that when the same verb, though of a different tense, gender, or number, is to be employed in two or more clauses of the verse, it is not unfrequently omitted in one clause, and must be supplied from the other (*vide supra*, x. 12).

The Syriac, כְּלָלָא בְּסִנְהֶ דְּכֵּן אֲמַרְנָא לְכָל אֲנָשׁ, *for this is given to all men by one master*, is evidently a corruption;

כְּלָלָא בְּסִנְהֶ דְּכֵּן אֲמַרְנָא לְכָל אֲנָשׁ was undoubtedly a marginal gloss upon אֲמַרְנָא בְּסִנְהֶ דְּכֵּן in verse 11, and has here been inserted by mistake.

14. *For God will bring, &c.* The admonition to fear God and to keep his commandments, which was enforced in the foregoing verse, by the declaration that he takes cognisance of everything (הַכֹּל יִדְעָהוּ), is here further urged by the fact, that this observing of everything is not all; that there is a future judgment appointed over all the secrets of men, when God shall bring before his tribunal every human action which he has noticed, whether good or bad. The declaration that *every deed* will be brought into judgment, which cannot possibly refer to an earthly tribunal (comp. v. 7), and the fact that this judgment is to be over *every secret thing*, i. e., is to extend over every action of ours, which is concealed from our fellow-creatures, and can therefore not take place in

ordinary courts of justice, shew uncontestedly that Coheleth speaks of a future judgment, when God, the righteous Judge, shall reward every man according to his deeds, whether they be good or evil. So plain and convincing are the words of the text, that even Kuobel, who labours to prove that Coheleth denies the immortality of the soul, is constrained to say, betrachtet man die Stelle unbefangen, so muß man den Gedanken an ein förmliches Gericht, wie man es sich als nach dem Tode eintreten denkt, darin anerkennen. Darauf führt 1) schon der Ausdruck, daß Gott jede That in das Gericht d. h. vor seinen Richtersstuhl zur richterlichen Beurtheilung bringen werde, sowie 2) der Ausdruck, daß dieses Gericht über alles Verborgene werde abgehalten werden. Die letzte Formel wird immer da gebraucht, wo von einem förmlichen Gerichte z. B. dem nach dem Tode die Rede ist; vergl., Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 5; 1 Tim. v. 24, 25, *if one considers this passage impartially, he must admit that it speaks of a formal judgment, which, as is believed, will take place after death. This is evident* — 1. *From the expression, God will bring EVERY WORK into judgment, i. e., will bring it before his judgment-seat for judicial examination; and* 2. *From the statement that this judgment will be over EVERY SECRET THING. The latter phrase is always used when a formal judgment, a judgment after death, is spoken of* (comp. Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 5; 1 Tim. v. 24, 25). The absence of the article in כָּל הַסֵּתֶר shows that it belongs to כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים, i. e., *the judgment over or concerning every secret thing, the judgment extending over or appointed respecting every secret thing*; so that כָּל marks the *object* of the judgment (*vide supra*, ii. 20, iii. 18). The Septuagint's rendering of it by *with*, which is followed by the Geneva Bible, Authorised Version, Noyes, &c., and which has given rise to the rendering *as well as, and* (the Zurich

will bring every work to the judgment appointed over every secret thing, whether it be good or evil.

Bible, Coverdale, the Bishops' Bible, Hodgson, &c.), is therefore inadmissible. The Vulgate, ET CUNCTA, QUÆ FIUNT, ADDUCET DEUS IN JUDICIUM PRO OMNI ERRATO, *God will bring into judgment all things that are done for every error, is a tame paraphrase.*

The Syriac כְּלָלָא בְּסִנְהֶ דְּכֵּן, *respecting all things secret and revealed*, adds אַחֲרָא after כָּל הַסֵּתֶר. Ibn Ezra's explanation of כָּל הַסֵּתֶר by כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים, i. e., *according to the intention of the heart, whether it be good or evil*, which is followed by many modern commentators, is precluded by ל before כָּל הַסֵּתֶר; Luther's version entirely ignores the word כָּל. The Massorites repeat verse 13 after verse 14, because of the word כָּל,

evil, being anxious that the inspired book should not terminate with so harsh an expression, and that the reader should leave off with words of comfort. For this reason the last verse but one is also repeated at the end of Isaiah, Malachi, and Lamentations. To shew, however, that the verse thus repeated does not belong to the text, the Massorites have not pointed it, and added in each of these books סִימָן לִי-כָךְ, *mark It-Kak*, i. e., note that this is one of the four books indicated by the initials כָּל-ר', the 'standing for כָּל-ר', *Isaiah*; the ר' for כָּל-ר', *twelve Minor Prophets*, of which Malachi is the last; the first ק for כָּל-ר', *Lamentations*, and the second ק for *Coheleth* — which have the penultimate verse εὐφραμίαις χαρῶν repeated.

THE
WORDS OF COHELETH,
SON OF DAVID, KING IN JERUSALEM.

2 Vanity of vanities, saith Coheleth, vanity of vanities, all is
3 vanity: man hath no advantage from all his toil where-
4 with he toileth under the sun; for generation passeth
5 away and generation cometh on; while the earth abideth
6 for ever. The sun also riseth and the sun setteth, and,
7 though it pantingly goeth to its place, it riseth there again.
8 The wind goeth to the south, and turneth to the north; it
9 goeth round and round, yet the wind returneth to its course.
10 All the streams run into the sea, and the sea doth not
11 overflow; the place where the streams go to, thence they
12 return again. All words are feeble. Men could never utter,
13 the eye could never be satisfied with seeing, and the ear
14 could never be filled with hearing all. What hath been still is,
15 and what hath been done is still done, and there is nothing
16 new under the sun. If there be anything of which it
17 is said, Behold this is new! it hath been long ago, in
18 the time of old, which was before us. But there is no
19 remembrance of former men, nor will there be any re-
20 membrance of future men among those who will live
21 hereafter.
22, 23 I, Coheleth, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And
24 I gave my heart to enquire diligently into wisdom
25 respecting all that is done under heaven; this is a grievous

business which God hath given to the children of men
14 to busy themselves therewith. I considered all the
15 works that are done under the sun, and behold they are all
16 vanity and striving after the wind; for the desponding
17 cannot be set right, since he that is gone cannot be num-
18 bered again. I therefore spake to my heart, saying, "I, lo!
19 I have acquired far greater wisdom than any one who was
20 before me over Jerusalem—my heart having seen much
21 wisdom and knowledge, for I have given my heart to
22 know wisdom and knowledge—I know that even this is
23 striving after the wind. For, in much wisdom is much
24 sadness, and multiplying knowledge is multiplying sorrow.
25 ii. I then spake to my heart, Come, now, let me try thee
26 with mirth, and thou shalt see pleasure! And, lo! this
27 too is vanity. To mirth I said, Thou actest foolishly!
28 and to pleasure, What doeth she? I resolved with my
29 heart to entice my body with pleasure, my mind guiding
30 with wisdom, and to lay hold on folly, till I should see
31 what is good for the sons of men which they should do
32 under heaven, the numbered days of their lives; I therefore
33 increased my possessions, I builded me houses, I planted
34 me vineyards, I made me gardens and pleasure-grounds,
35 and I planted in them trees of all sorts of fruit. I made
36 me pools of water, to water therefrom the grove yielding
37 trees; I bought me men-servants and maid-servants,
38 and had house-born servants; I had also many herds of
39 oxen and sheep, above all who were before me in Jeru-
40 salem; I amassed me also silver and gold, and the treasures
41 of kings and kingdoms; I got me men-singers and women-
42 singers, and the delight of men—a large number of wives;
43 so that I greatly increased above all that were before me in
44 Jerusalem, my wisdom also aiding me therein; and nothing
45 that my eyes desired did I withhold from them; I did not
46 keep back my heart from any pleasure, as my heart was to
47 receive happiness from all my toil; and this was to be my

11 portion from all my toil. But when I looked at all my works which my hands worked, and at the toil wherewith I toiled to accomplish them, behold, all was vanity and striving after the wind, since there is no advantage under the sun. I then turned to consider wisdom, and madness, and folly;—for what is the man that will succeed the king, who was made king long ago?—and I saw that there is an advantage to wisdom over folly, as is the advantage of light over darkness. As for the wise man, his eyes are in his head, while the fool walketh in blindness; and yet I knew that the same fate will meet both. I therefore spake with my heart, A fate like that of the fool must also meet me, even me, and why am I then wiser? and I said to my heart that this too is vanity; since there is no remembrance of the wise man as of the fool for ever, for, as in time past, both will be forgotten in days to come. And, alas! how like the fool dieth the wise man! Therefore I hated life, for the work which is worked under the sun pressed heavily upon me, as all is vanity and striving after the wind; and I hated all my gain which I gained under the sun, as I must leave it to the man who shall come after me, and no one knoweth whether he will be a wise man or a fool, and yet he shall have power over all my gain which I have wisely gained under the sun; this, too, is vanity. Thus I turned to cause my heart to despair of all the gain which I gained under the sun; for here is a man who hath laboured wisely, and prudently, and skilfully, and must leave it as a portion to a man who hath not worked at it at all; this, too, is vanity and a great evil. For man hath nothing from all his labour and the striving of his heart that he laboureth under the sun, since his business grieveth and irritateth him all his days, and his mind doth not rest even at night; this also is vanity. There is nothing better for man than to eat and drink, and let his soul enjoy pleasure in his labour; even this I saw cometh from God: for who

should eat, and who should hasten thereunto, except I? For to the man who is good before Him He giveth wisdom, and knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner He giveth the business to gather and to amass, that he may give it to him who is good before God. This, too, is vanity, and striving after the wind.

iii. There is a fixed time for all things, and an appointed season for all undertakings under heaven; a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to save; a time to break down, and a time to build up houses; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to rejoice; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather up stones; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend garments, and a time to sew them together; a time to be silent, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. He who laboureth hath therefore no advantage from that wherein he laboureth. I have considered the business which God hath given to the sons of men to busy themselves therewith; he hath made it all beautiful in its season; he hath also put eternity into their heart, only that man understandeth not the work which God hath made from beginning to end. I knew, then, that there was no good for them but to rejoice and do themselves good all their life; and also that if a man eat and drink, and enjoy pleasure in all his labour, it is a gift of God. I knew that whatever God hath made, the same continueth for ever; to it nothing can be added, and from it nothing can be taken; and God hath so done it that men may fear before him. What hath been was long ago, and what is to be was long ago, for God recalleth what is past. And, moreover, I saw under the sun, that in the place of justice there was iniquity, and in the place of equity there was

17 iniquity. I said to my heart, God will judge the righteous
and the wicked, for there is a time of judgment with Him,
18 for every thing and deed. Yet I said to my heart respecting
the children of men, God hath chosen them to shew that
19 they, even they, are like beasts. For man is mere chance,
and the beast is mere chance, and they are both subject to
the same chance; as is the death of one, so is the death of
the other, and both have the same spirit; and the advantage
20 of man over the beast is nothing, for both are vanity: both
go to the same place, both were made of dust, and both turn
21 into dust again: no one knoweth whether the spirit of man
goeth upward, and whether the spirit of the beast goeth down-
22 ward to the earth. Wherefore I saw that there is nothing
better for man than to rejoice in his labours, for this is his
portion, since no one can bring him to see what will be here-
iv. after. Then I saw again all the oppressed who are suffering
under the sun, and beheld the tears of the oppressed, and
they had no comforter, and with their oppressors there was
2 violence, and they had no comforter; and I esteemed the dead
happy who have died long ago, more than the living who
3 are still alive; and happier than both, him who hath not
been born, who hath not seen these evil doings which are
4 done under the sun. Then I saw that all the toil, and
all the skill in work, are from jealousy of one toward
the other, this also is vanity and striving after the wind;
5 the sluggard foldeth his hands and yet eateth his meat;
6 better a handful of enjoyment than two handfuls of labour
7 and striving after the wind. And again I saw a vanity under
8 the sun; here is one who hath no one with him, hath not
even a son or a brother, and yet there is no end to all his
labour; even his eyes are not satisfied with riches; and for
whom do I labour and deny my soul any of my riches? this,
9 too, is vanity, and a grievous business. Happier are two than
10 one, because they have a good reward for their labour; for if
one fall, the other will lift up his fellow; but woe to the

solitary one who falleth and hath no fellow to help him up.
11 Moreover, if two sleep together they are warm; but a solitary
12 one, how can he be warm? And if an enemy overpower the
solitary one, two surely will withstand him, and a threefold
13 cord is not easily broken. Happier is a poor and wise youth
than an old and foolish king who knoweth no one to counsel
14 him. For a prisoner may go from prison to a throne,
whilst a king may become a beggar in his own kingdom.
15 I see all the living who walk under the sun, associating
16 with the youth who succeedeth him; there is no end to
all the people, to all over whom he ruleth. Yet those who
will live afterwards shall not rejoice in him, for even this
17 is vanity and striving after the wind. Keep thy feet when
thou goest to the house of God, for to obey is a nearer way
to Him than to offer the sacrifice of the disobedient, as
v. they who obey know not to do evil. Do not hasten thy
mouth, and do not urge thy heart to utter words before God,
for God is in heaven and thou art upon earth, therefore let
2 thy words be few; moreover, dreaming cometh through the
multitude of things, and foolish talk through the multitude
3 of words. When thou vowest a vow to God, hesitate not to
pay it, for fools have no fixed will; pay that which thou hast
4 vowed. Better that thou shouldst not vow than that thou
5 shouldst vow and not pay. Do not suffer thy mouth to
cause thy flesh to sin, and do not say before the angel that it
was an error: why should God be angry on account of thy idle
6 talk, and destroy the work of thine hands? For all this is
through the multitude of idle thoughts, and vanities, and
7 much talking; but fear thou the Lord. If thou seest oppres-
sion of the poor, and perverting of justice and equity in the
land, be not alarmed at the matter; for there is a superior
8 watching the superior, and superiors again over them; and
the advantage for the people is, that it extendeth to all; even
9 the king himself is subject to the field. Whoso loveth money
is never satisfied with money, nor he who loveth riches

10 with what they yield ; this, too, is vanity. For when riches increase, those that consume them increase ; what advantage, therefore, hath the owner thereof, except the looking thereon
 11 with his eyes ? Sweet is the sleep of the husbandman, whether he eat little or much ; whilst abundance doth not
 12 suffer the rich to sleep. There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun — riches hath been hoarded up by the
 13 rich for the owner thereof to his hurt. For the riches perish in some unfortunate business, and he begetteth a
 14 son when he hath nothing in his possession. As he cometh forth from the womb of his mother, even as he cometh naked, he returneth again, and taketh nothing from his work
 15 which he may carry away as his possession. And even this is a sore evil, just as he cometh so must he go, and what
 16 advantage hath he who laboureth for the wind ? Yet he eateth all his days in darkness, and is much disturbed, and
 17 hath grief and vexation. Behold, that which I have seen is good, that it is well for man to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good in all his labours which he laboureth under the sun, the numbered days of his life which God hath
 18 given him ; for this is his portion ; and also, that if a man to whom God hath given riches and wealth is enabled to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in
 19 his labour, this is a gift of God. He should remember that the days of his life are not many, that God causeth him to work for the enjoyment of his heart.

vi. There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it
 2 weigheth heavily upon man. Here is a man to whom God hath given riches, and wealth, and abundance, so that his soul lacketh nothing of all that it desireth, and God hath not given him the power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth
 3 it ; this is vanity, and a sore evil. Though one beget a hundred children, and live many years, yea, numerous as may be the days of his years, yet if his soul is not satisfied with good, and even if the grave did not wait for him, I say,

4 Better than he is an untimely birth ; for this cometh in nothingness and goeth in darkness, and with darkness is its
 5 memory covered ; it doth not even see, and doth not know
 6 the sun ; it hath more rest than he. And if he live twice a thousand years and see no good, do not both go to the same
 7 place ? All the labour of this man is for his mouth, and yet
 8 the soul cannot be satisfied ; for what advantage hath the wise man over the fool ? what the poor man over him who
 9 knoweth to walk before the living ? Better, indeed, is that which is seen by the eyes, than that which is pursued by the soul ; yet this, too, is vanity and striving after the wind.
 10 What hath been was long ago called by name ; moreover, it is known that he is a man, and cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he ; what advantage then hath man ?
 11 Moreover, there are many things which increase vanity ;
 12 and who knoweth what is good for man in life, the numbered days of his vain life, which he spendeth as a shadow ? and who can tell man what shall be after him under the sun ?
 vii. A good name is better than sweet perfume, and the day of
 2 death than the day of his birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, because this is the end of all men, and the living will lay it
 3 to heart. Better is thoughtful sadness than wanton mirth,
 4 for by a serious countenance the heart is improved. The heart of the wise, therefore, is in the house of mourning, and
 5 the heart of fools in the house of mirth. It is better for a man to listen to the reproof of a wise man, than to hear the
 6 song of fools ; for as the crackling of thorns is under the pot, so is the laughter of a fool ; this, also, is vanity ; for extortion maketh the wise man foolish, and bribery corrupteth the
 8 heart. The end of a reproof is better than its beginning,
 9 forbearance is better than haughtiness. Do not, therefore, hasten on thy spirit to be angry, for anger is cherished in
 10 the bosom of fools. Do not say why was it that former days were better than these ; for thou wouldst not, from

11 wisdom, ask after them. Wisdom is as good as riches, and moreover hath an advantage over them for those who see the
 12 sun. For to be in the shelter of wisdom is to be under the shelter of riches, and the advantage of wisdom is, that
 13 wisdom enliveneth the possessor thereof. Consider, moreover, the work of God, since no man can straighten that
 14 which he hath made crooked. In the day of prosperity live therefore as in prosperity, and in the day of adversity consider that God hath also made this as well as that, to the end that man should not discover anything which will be after him.
 15 I have seen in my fleeting days, both the righteous die in his righteousness, and the wicked live long in his wickedness.
 16 Be not therefore very righteous, and make not thyself too
 17 wise, for thou wilt only make thyself to be forsaken. Be not very wicked, and be not foolish, lest thou die before thy
 18 time. It is better that thou shouldst lay hold of this, and also not let go thy hand from that, for whoso feareth God
 19 will make his way with both. Wisdom alone is greater strength to the wise, than many mighty men who have been
 20 in the city; for there is not a righteous man upon earth who
 21 doeth good and sinneth not. Moreover, give not thy heart to all the words which are uttered, lest thou hear thy servant
 22 speak evil against thee; for thy heart knoweth that oftentimes
 23 thou also hast spoken evil of others. All this have I tried by wisdom; I wished to be wiser, but it was far from me.
 24 Far remaineth what was far, and deep, deep! who can find
 25 it out? I and my heart turned to know and diligently to examine practical wisdom, in order to know the cause of
 26 wickedness, vice, and mad folly, and I found woman more bitter than death; she is a net, her heart a snare, and her hands are chains; whoso is good before God shall escape from
 27 her; but the sinner shall be caught by her. Behold what I have found, saith Coheleth — taking one thing after another
 28 to find the result — and what my soul is still seeking, and I have not found; one man among a thousand I have found,

29 but a woman among all that number I have not found: only behold this have I found, that God made man upright, but
 viii. 1 they seek out many devices. Who is like the wise man? and who like him that understandeth the meaning of the thing? The wisdom of this man enlighteneth his
 2 countenance, and his stern visage is changed. I say, then, obey the king's command, and especially because of the oath
 3 of God. Do not go away hastily from his presence, do not even stand up because of an evil word, for he doth whatsoever
 4 pleaseth him; inasmuch as the word of a king is powerful,
 5 and who shall say unto him, What doest thou? Whoso keepeth the commandment knoweth not an evil word. Moreover the heart of the wise man knoweth a time of judgment;
 6 for there is a time of judgment for everything, when the
 7 tyranny of a man is heavy upon him. Because he knoweth not what will be, and because no one can tell him when it
 8 will be. No man is ruler over his spirit to retain the spirit, and there is no power over the day of death; and there is no furlough in this battle, and no cunning will save the wicked;
 9 all this I have seen, having given my heart to all the doing that is done under the sun. There is a time when a man
 10 ruleth over men to their injury; and thus I have seen wicked men buried and come again, and those who did right depart from the place of the holy, and be forgotten in the city;
 11 also this is vanity. Because sentence is not forthwith executed for evil work, the heart of the sons of men is full
 12 in them to do evil, and because a sinner doeth evil a hundred years and is perpetuated. But I also knew that it shall be well with those who fear God, who truly fear before Him;
 13 and it shall not be well to the wicked, and, like a shadow, he shall not prolong his existence, because he doth not fear
 14 before God. Still there is this vanity happening upon the earth, that there are righteous men who have wages like that of the wicked, and there are wicked who have wages like that of the righteous; I said that this, too, is vanity.

15 And I praised mirth, because there is nothing better for man under the sun than to eat, and drink, and rejoice, and this will follow him in his work during the days of his life which God giveth him under the sun.

16 As I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to see the work which is done under the sun, how that one doth not see

17 sleep with his eyes by day and by night, I then saw that man cannot find out all the doing of God which is done under the sun; wherefore man laboureth to search it, and cannot find it out; and even if the wise man saith he under-

ix. 1 standeth it, he cannot find it out. For all this have I taken to heart, and proved all this, that the righteous and the wise, and their labours, are in the hand of God; these men know

2 neither love nor hatred, both are before them, both just as before all others; the same fate happeneth to the righteous and the wicked; to the good and pure and to the impure; to him who sacrificeth and to him who doth not sacrifice; as is the good so is the sinner, he that sweareth as he who

3 feareth an oath. This is the greatest evil of all that is done under the sun, that there is the same fate for all, and that, although the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their hearts during their life, yet, after it, they

4 go to the dead; for who is excepted? To all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion; since the living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything; and there is no more any advantage to them, for

6 their memory ceaseth to be; also their love as well as their hatred and their zeal have long perished, and there is no more any portion for them for ever in all that is done under

7 the sun. Go, then, eat with gladness thy bread, and drink thy wine with cheerful heart, as God hath long since been pleased with thy works; let thy garments be white at all times, and let no perfume be lacking upon thy head; enjoy life with the woman whom thou lovest, all the days of thy vain life which He giveth thee under the sun, all thy vain

days, for this is thy portion in life, and in the labour where-
10 with thou labourest under the sun: whatever thine hand findeth to do, whilst thou art able, do it; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in Hades,
11 whereunto thou art going. Then again I saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor yet bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to the learned; that the time of misfortune cometh
12 upon all, and that man doth not even know his time; like fish which are taken in a destructive net, and like sparrows which are caught in a snare, like these are the sons of men ensnared in the time of misfortune, when it suddenly cometh upon them.
13 Even this wisdom have I seen, and it seemed great to me:
14 There was a little city, and few men in it; and a powerful king came against it, and besieged it, and built great towers
15 over it. And there was found in it a poor wise man, and he saved the city by his wisdom; and yet no one remembered
16 that poor man. Therefore I say, wisdom is indeed better than force, yet the wisdom of the poor is despised, and his
17 words are not listened to. Though the words of the wise are listened to with greater pleasure than the shouting of a
18 foolish ruler, and wisdom is better than instruments of war,
x. 1 yet one fool destroyeth much good; a dead fly maketh sweet ointment stinkingly to ferment; a little folly is more mighty
2 than honourable wisdom. Still the mind of the wise man is at his right hand, but the mind of the fool at his left; and even when the fool walketh on the road he lacketh his mind,
4 and yet he saith of every one, He is a fool! If the anger of the ruler is kindled against thee, quit not thy place, for
5 gentleness preventeth greater outrages. There is an evil which I have seen under the sun — an outrage as that which
6 proceedeth from a ruler; a great fool is placed in many high
7 positions, and the noble sit in degradation: I have seen servants upon horses, and masters walking on the ground
8 as servants. Yet he who diggeth a pit shall fall into it,

9 and whoso breaketh down a wall a serpent shall bite him ;
 he who breaketh up stones shall be hurt therewith ; whoso
 10 cleaveth wood shall be cut thereby. If the axe be blunt,
 and he do not sharpen it beforehand, he shall only increase
 the army ; but the advantage of repairing hath wisdom.
 11 if the serpent bite without enchantment, there is no advan-
 12 tage to the charmer. The words from the mouth of the
 wise man gain him favour, but those from the lips of the
 13 fool destroy him ; the beginning of the words of his mouth
 is folly, and the end of the words of his mouth is mischievous
 14 madness. The fool also speaketh much, though no man
 knoweth what shall be here nor what shall be hereafter ;
 15 who can tell him it ? The work of a fool wearieth him,
 16 because he knoweth not how to go to the city. Woe to thee,
 O land, when thy king is childish, and thy princes feast
 17 in the morning ! Happy thou, O land, when thy king is
 noble, and thy princes eat in proper time, for strength and
 18 not for feasting ! Through slothful hands the roof falleth
 19 in, and through lazy hands the house leaketh. They turn
 bread and wine, which cheereth life, into revelry, and the
 20 money of — is made to supply both. Still do not
 revile the king even in thy thoughts, and do not revile the
 prince even in thy bed-chamber, for the bird of the air
 conveyeth the report, and the winged creature telleth the
 xi. 1 story. Cast thy bread upon the surface of the water, for in
 2 the process of time thou mayest find the profit of it ; give a
 portion thereof to seven and even to eight, for thou knowest
 3 not what misfortune there may be upon the earth. When
 the clouds are full of rain they empty it upon the earth,
 and when the tree falleth in the south or north, in the
 4 place where the tree falleth there it lieth ; whoso therefore
 watcheth the wind shall not sow, and he who looketh at the
 5 clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest as little the course
 of the wind as the formation in the womb of the pregnant,
 so thou knowest not the work of God who worketh all

6 things. Sow, then, thy seed in the morning, and withhold
 not thine hand therefrom in the evening, since thou knowest
 not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether both shall
 7 be alike good ; and the light shall be sweet, and it shall be
 8 cheering to the eyes to see the sun. For even if a man
 should live many years, he ought to rejoice in them all, and
 to remember that there will be many dark days, that all
 9 which is coming is vanity ! Rejoice, O young man, in thy
 youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in thy youthful days,
 and pursue the ways of thine heart, and the things which
 are seen by the eyes, and know that, respecting all these,
 10 God will bring thee into judgment. Banish, therefore,
 sorrow from thy mind, and put away sadness from thy body,
 xii. 1 for youth and manhood are vanity ; and remember thy
 Creator in the days of thy youth, before the days of evil
 come, and the years arrive of which thou shalt say, I have
 2 no pleasure in them : before the sun becometh dark, and
 the light, and the moon, and the stars, and the clouds
 3 return after the rain ; when the keepers of the house shall
 quake, and the men of power writhe, and the grinding-
 maids shall stop because they have greatly diminished, and
 the women who look out of the windows shall be shrouded
 4 in darkness ; and the doors shall be closed in the street :
 when the noise of the mill shall grow faint, and the swallow
 shall rise to shriek, and all the singing birds shall retire ;
 5 yea the people shall be frightened at that which is coming
 from on high, and at the terrors which are on their way ; and
 the almond shall be despised, and the locust shall be loathed,
 and the caper-berry shall be powerless ; for man goeth to
 his eternal home, and the mourners walk about the street :
 6 before the silver cord goeth asunder, and the golden bowl
 escapeth, or the bucket breaketh upon the fountain, and the
 7 wheel is shattered at the well, and the body returneth to
 the earth as it was, and the spirit goeth back to God who
 gave it.

- 8 Vanity of vanities, saith Coheleth; all is vanity!
 9 And besides that Coheleth was a wise man, he also taught
 the people wisdom, and carefully and studiously composed
 10 many parables. Coheleth sought to find words of comfort,
 11 and he wrote down frankly the words of truth. The words
 of the wise are like goads, and those of the masters of the
 assemblies are like fixed stakes, given by the same shepherd.
 12 And beyond these, my son, beware! to make many books
 there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.
 13 In conclusion, everything is noticed; fear God, and keep
 14 his commandments, for this every man should do; for God
 will bring every work to the judgment appointed over every
 secret thing, whether it be good or evil.

APPENDICES.

I.

ANCIENT VERSIONS.

The comparison of the ancient versions with the original, instituted throughout the Commentary, has shewn us that there are considerable discrepancies between them and the Hebrew. Many and various have been the attempts made by critics to account for these divergences. Some have supposed that the translators had a different text to what we now have; others that they had a meagre knowledge of the Hebrew, and misunderstood its meaning; some have maintained that they have designedly deviated from the original, and that no heed is to be paid to their false renderings; whilst others, again, have assured us that the Jews have since wilfully corrupted the text, that the unadulterated readings are to be found in the ancient versions, and that the Hebrew text must be corrected by them. These extreme opinions, however, proceed from the erroneous supposition that the ancient translators had the scientific and well-defined rule of exegesis, as well as the critical apparatus, which we now possess, and that the genius of the Greek and Latin languages admits of a literal and verbatim translation of the Hebrew; so that by turning the Greek or Latin version again into Hebrew, we obtain the words, the gender, number, and tense of the original. Thus, we are gravely assured, by eminent critics, that the Septuagint's rendering of לֵבָבִי לֵבָבִי by $\text{ἐμὴν ἡ ἐκκλησιαστὴς}$ shows the incorrect separation of the words in the Hebrew; ἐκκλησιαστὴς being a masculine noun in Greek, the Hebrew word לֵבָבִי , for which it stands, must also be masculine, and hence cannot be construed with לֵבָבִי , a feminine verb (*vid. supra*, p. 388). The folly of this mode of proceeding will appear all the more glaring when we bear in mind that, apart from the difference of idioms which frequently necessitated the addition or omission of words or the solution of tropes, and the inadvertences, inconsistencies, and mistakes which are to be found in all human productions, the translators, having been Jews, or impregnated with Jewish opinions, followed the Hagadic mode of interpretation, and frequently explained the text according to the rules described in the Introduction (p. 30), thus giving us rather the views of others about the meaning of passages than that which the words themselves signify.

Every repetition of a word or sentence in the Scriptures, every figure of speech, parallelism, and synonymous expression, word, syllable, letter—nay the very shape and ornaments, or titles, the similarity of appearance or sound of one letter or word to another Hebrew or foreign letter or word are regarded by the Hagadic interpreters as furnishing a clue to unlock the recondite and mysterious treasure concealed in the Bible. Hence the

various senses assigned to the same word or phrase when repeated; hence the alteration of letters or words according to the exigencies of the place; hence the interchange of assonances, or of letters and expressions resembling each other; hence the different separations of the same word; hence the reduction of letters and words to their numerical value, and their explanation by other letters and words of the same quantity, and many other modes of dealing with the text, most of which have been pointed out in the Commentary as having been practised by the ancient translators. The extent, however, of the Hagadic influence on the ancient versions can only be ascertained by a careful comparison of these versions with the Midrashim, the Talmud, and the Chaldee paraphrases. It will then be seen that many of the discrepancies between the ancient versions and the Hebrew text are neither owing to ignorance on the part of the translators, nor to different readings, nor to a wilful corruption of the text, but are simply the result of the application of one or other of the Hagadic rules of interpretation, examples of which have been given in p. 30, &c., and throughout the Commentary. All that remains to be done now, is to classify some of the deviations of those versions. The Septuagint, being the oldest version, claims our attention first.

A. THE SEPTUAGINT.

The Hagadic influence on this version manifests itself in various ways, and accounts for, as well as explains, many renderings which are otherwise inexplicable and unintelligible. Thus—

1. The particle *με*, the sign of the accusative, which occurs as such seventy-one times in Coheleth, is in forty-two instances—i. 13; ii. 3. 10. 12. 14. 20. 24; iii. 11. 15; iv. 3. 5. (twice) 8. 10; v. 3. 5. (thrice) 18. 19; vii. 7. 13. (twice) 14. 18. (twice) 21; viii. 8. 9. 16. (twice); ix. 7. 11. 12. 15; x. 20; xi. 5. 6. 8; xii. 1. 13. (twice)—regarded as the accusative; whereas in the other twenty-nine instances—i. 14; ii. 17. 18; iii. 10. 11. (twice) 17. (twice); iv. 1. 2. 3. 4. (twice) 15; v. 6; vii. 15. 20; viii. 8. 9. 15. 17. (twice); ix. 1. (twice) 15; x. 19; xi. 7; xii. 9. 14—it is rendered by *σιν* = *with*. Commentators have been perplexed to account for this barbarism and violation of grammatical propriety; but a reference to the Hagadic exegesis will shew that this Hebrew particle was looked up to as having a mystical significance, because the two letters, *מ* and *נ*, of which it is composed, are the alpha and omega of the Hebrew alphabet (comp. Midrash Rabba, Yalkut, and Rashi, on Numb. vi. 13.). Hence the anxiety of the translator to indicate this particle in Greek, when a passage appeared to him to be fraught with special mysteries.

2. The Hagadic influence is still more evident in the peculiar renderings and paraphrases of ii. 12. 17; iii. 15; iv. 17; v. 1; vi. 8; vii. 6. 12. 21; viii. 1; x. 17. 19; xi. 9; xii. 9, where whole phrases and sentiments of the Hagada have been introduced into the Greek version, as has been shewn in the Commentary, many of which can only be understood by comparing them with the Midrashim or Chaldee paraphrase.

3. As the object of this mode of interpretation is more to shew the recondite and spiritual meaning of every detached verse and clause than to elucidate the design of the inspired book, such sentences as apparently savoured of heterodoxy are made orthodox by adding or explaining away some words (comp. ii. 15. 17; xi. 9).

4. Changing letters or words for those which are similar in appearance or sound, is one of the rules whereby the many meanings of the text are obtained (comp. i. 18; ii. 3; v. 16. 17; vii. 22; viii. 6. 9. 12; ix. 2, with Introduction, p. 31).

5. Such exegesis can have no regard for the recurrence of some phrases;

and hence the same sentences are rendered according to the will of the translator (comp. i. 9 with iii. 15), who frequently adds words (i. 1; vii. 2; x. 19), or alters them (vii. 18; viii. 10; x. 10), or changes them (i. 13; ii. 3; viii. 18), when it is deemed necessary to obtain a particular sense.

6. When the translator has no recondite meaning to evolve, and adheres to the text, his renderings sometimes follow the very order of the words in the Hebrew and are exceedingly obscure (comp. viii. 11.), but sometimes are happy, and are a valuable contribution to modern criticism, *e.g.* v. 15; viii. 5. 9. 15; ix. 17, and many other passages duly noticed in the Commentary.

B. AQUILA.

The dispute into which the Septuagint had fallen among the Jews induced Aquila, a Jewish proselyte who flourished about A. D. 150, to undertake a new translation, which he executed with slavish literality, as is evident from the surviving portion of it. He, too, translated the mysterious particle *με* by *σιν*.¹ The Talmud speaks in high terms of this version.² And though it is to be greatly regretted that the fragments of it which have escaped destruction are too small to shew us what sense the translator attached to the difficult portions of Coheleth, yet they frequently indicate the old readings of the text.

C. THEODOTON.

Whether it was the servile, and at times unintelligible, version of Aquila, or some other cause, which made it necessary that another translation of the Hebrew verity should be made, it is now difficult to say; all that we know is, that Theodotion, also a Jewish proselyte, a native of Ephesus and a contemporary of Aquila, published a fresh translation shortly after the former appeared. The fragments which have come down to us of his version of Coheleth are too insignificant to enable us to judge what mode he adopted in translating this difficult book. It appears, however, from his translation of this (comp. i. 19; iii. 19; viii. 6), and other portions of Scripture, that he made both the Septuagint and Aquila the basis of his translation, and that he followed the Hagadic exegesis, as is evident from Gen. iv. 4, where he translates *הָאָדָם* by *καὶ ἐκτίσεν ὁ θεός, and God set on fire*, of which St. Jerome highly approves, and remarks, *unde scire poterat Cain, quod fratris munera suscepisset Deus et sua repudiasset, nisi illa interpretatio vera esset, quam Theodotion posuit: Et inflammavit Dominus super Abel, et super sacrificium ejus, &c. Ignem autem ad sacrificium devorandum solum venire de celo.*³ Rashi, who gives us the Hagadic explanations, says, *ידה אש ויחכה, a fire descended and consumed his sacrifice.* Theodotion also renders *מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם* by *ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν* *παρακαταστάς* *διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἐκ τῆς γῆς*

¹ Aquila autem proselytus et contentiosus interpres, qui non solum verba, sed etymologias quoque verborum transferre conatus est, jure projicitur a nobis. Quis enim pro frumento, et vino, et oleo possit, vel legere vel intelligere, *χῆμας, ἀπαρισμὸν, σπιλινότητα* (Deut. vii. 13.), quod nos possumus dicere *fusionem pomationemque et splendentiam*. Aut quia Hebræi non solum habent *ἀβρα*, sed et *πρίαβρα*; ille *καλοῖται* et syllabas interpretatur et litteras, dicitque *σὺν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ σὺν τῇ γῇ*, quod Græca et Latina Lingua omnino non recipit.—Hieronym. Ep. ad Pammach. de opt. gen. interpretaudi. Comp. Henry Owen, An Enquiry into the present state of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, p. 102; Davidson, Biblical Criticism, p. 216.

² Sabbath, 8, b; Yoma, 41, a; Megilla, 73, b.

³ Hieronym. question. Heb. in Genesin ad h. versum.

αἰώνων, and one of five did the children of Israel go out of the land of Egypt (Exod. xiii. 18); according to the Midrash (*in loco*), which explains the חמשים by אחד מחמשה יצאו, which is also mentioned by Rashi, who remarks, דבר אחר חמשי' מחומשי' אחד מחמש יצאו וארבעה חלקים מהו בשלשת ימי אסיה, that חמשים is also explained by one of five, i. e., one from five went out, and four portions died during the three days of darkness. It is also owing to Hagadic influence that Theodotion frequently retains Hebrew words without translating them (comp. Exod. xii. 11; Levit. xiii. 6. 19), fearing lest he might not succeed in giving the correct equivalent in Greek.

D. SYMMACHUS.

Shortly after the appearance of the above two versions, Symmachus, who is represented by Eusebius and St. Jerome as an Ebionite, published a third translation, which is greatly superior to its predecessors, and has been justly held in high estimation by the most judicious of the Fathers. The fragments which remain of this shew that Symmachus aimed more at giving the sense of the Hebrew in intelligent, perspicuous, and elegant Greek, than at being slavishly literal (comp. i. 13; ii. 25; vi. 21). He was master of the Hebrew and Greek, and has given us some happy renderings (comp. i. 13; iii. 1; iv. 1. 12; ix. 4; x. 3. 9; xii. 1); yet he also sometimes follows the Septuagint (v. 8; ix. 2; x. 9), even in its Hagadic interpretations (iii. 15); he also mistook words (v. 2), and adopted the mistakes of Aquila and Theodotion (viii. 12).

E. THE SYRIAC VERSION.

The best version that antiquity has produced is the Syriac. This precious relic, which has been preserved to us entire, is of inestimable value for the criticism and interpretation of the Old Testament; the Syriac being a cognate language, the translator has frequently been able to give in the version the very roots of the original, and to follow the very order of the words and construction of the Hebrew. That this version was made direct from the Hebrew is evident—

1. From the several mistakes into which the translator has fallen. Thus, for instance, he mistook לברם האלהים for לברם האלהים (iii. 18). ברם and ברם having the same pronunciation in Hebrew, which could only be done by the translator having the Hebrew before him. The same is the case with his mistaking נחלה, an inheritance, for נחלה, an instrument (vii. 11); חלים, the army, for חלים, the slain (x. 10); and changing עם into עם, by a transposition of the second and third radicals, which is effected directly from the Hebrew.

2. From the translation following the very order of the words in the original, e. g.

ידעתי כי כל אשר יעשה האלהים הוא יהיה לעולם ועליו אין להסוס' וממנו אין לגרע ידעת דכל דעבר מריא דו נהנא לעלם עלהדי לית למוססו ומנה לית למבצר

והאלהים עשה שיראו מלפניו ומריא עבר ונדהליו מנה

מחוקה שנת העבר אם מעם ואם הרבה יאכל והשבע לעשיר איננו מניח לו לישון חליא שנחא דפליחא אן וצור אן סני אכל וכבצא לעחירא לא שבק לה למדסך

ובכן ראיתי ורשעים קברים ונאו וממקום קדוש יהלכו וישתכחו בעיר אשר כן עשו חדין חויה רשעים דקבירן ואחין ומן אתרא דקדשאו אולו ואחשמו במדינחא דהכנא עברו

chap. viii. 10.

The parallels require no comment, and are an irrefragable proof that the Syriac version was made directly from the Hebrew. As this invaluable translation has been greatly neglected, I have collated it with the Hebrew, the result of which may be seen in the following columns:—

THE SYRIAC.

THE HEBREW.

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|
| ספר קהלת היא שלמה בן דוד מלך ישראל | i. 8 | לא יוכל איש |
| לא ישבע איש | ii. 2 | מחולל |
| מה יעל | 3 | קניחי עבדים |
| וסבחי אני ליהא את לבי | 7 | ובני בית |
| קניחי לי עבדים | 8 | שרה ושדות |
| ובני בית הרבה | 11 | ובעמל |
| עשיתי לי שרה ושדות | 12 | את אשר כבר עשיתי |
| ובכל עמל | 16 | ממני |
| בדין עם שעשיתי | 25 | שמים |
| כי הסמל דבר הרבה | iii. 1 | עת לבקש ועת לאבד |
| סמנו | 6 | בדחי |
| שמש | 12 | את הנדון |
| עת לאבד ועת לבקש | 15 | לברם האלהים |
| בחייון | 18 | כי |
| לדון את הנדון | 19 | להם |
| כי ברם האלהים | 22 | סוב |
| יגיע להם | iv. 17 | במה שיהיה |
| יקרה את כלם | 3 | מחת |
| סוב בהם | 5 | לעשות רע |
| בכל שיהיה | 6 | חור נדר |
| סוב מחת | 7 | מלאך |
| לעשות סוב | 10 | הרבה |
| חור | 15 | משפט וצדק |
| אלהים | 16 | לבעליה |
| הרבה החסע | 17 | מח יתרון לו |
| ומשפט | 19 | ודליו וקצף |
| לבעל הסובה | 22 | קצם |
| מה יתרון בכל | 25 | ראיתי אני |
| וקצף וחלי ואכל | 28 | מענה |
| קצם | vi. 2 | יאכלנו |
| ראיתי אני קהלת | 8 | ודלי רע הוא |
| מענה לו | 1 | כי מה יותר לחכם מן הכסיל מה לעני וגו' |
| יאכלנו אחריו | 2 | שם |
| ודלי הוא | 11 | ויום המות |
| כי יש יתרון לחכם מן הכסיל מה [היתרון] | 12 | יתן אל בו |
| כי העני וגו' | 14 | עם חכמה |
| שם סוב | 17 | בצל |
| ויום המות סוב | 21 | ראה |
| יתן סוב אל לבו | 24 | אל חרש הרבה |
| מכלי קרב | 28 | אשר ידברו אל חתן לבך אשר לא תשמע |
| כצל | 2 | רוחך מה שהיה |
| ראה נספך | 4 | אשר עוד בקשה |
| אל חרש הרבה למה ישנא הרבה | | אני פי מלך שכר |
| אשר ידברו רשעים אל חתן לבך לא תשמע | | באשר |
| יותר מן שהיה רחוק | | |
| אשר בקשה | | |
| פי מלך ושמר | | |
| כאשר | | |

THE SYRIAC.

| THE SYRIAC. | THE HEBREW. |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| כי אין שידוע למה שהיה ומה שיהיה , | כי איננו ידע מה שיהיה כי כאשר יהיה כי |
| אחריו כי | במלחמה |
| ביום מלחמה | כי גם ידע אני |
| ידע אני | כאשר |
| על כן | ולבור את כל זה |
| לבי ראה את כל זה | הכל לפניכם |
| כל לפניכם הנל | לשוב ולשהור ולשמא |
| לשוב ולרע לשהור ולשמא | החללות בלבכם |
| החללות רע בלבכם | כי כבר רצה האלהים |
| כי רצה האלהים | כל ימי חיי הנלך אשר נתן לך חזח השמש כל |
| | ימי הנלך |
| כל ימי חיי הנלך | מצודים גדולים |
| מצודים | ומלש הוא |
| ומלש הוא המסכן | מכבוד |
| מכבוד הרבה | הוא לא פנים |
| הוא פנים | והולים יגבר |
| והולים יגבר | עמל הכסילים |
| עמל הכסילים | ללכת אל עיר |
| ללכת אל המדינה | לחם יין |
| לחם יין ושמן | היכסף יענה את הכל |
| והכסף יענה וישעה אוהם בכל | יולך את הקול |
| יולך את קולך | יגיד דבר |
| יגיד דברך | שלה לחמך על פני המים כי ברב המים |
| חן חלק לשבעה אף לשמונה כי לא חרע מה | המצאנו |
| רעה יהיה על הארץ | חן חלק לשבעה וגו' |
| שלה לחמך על פני המים כי ברב המים | |
| תמצאנו | בצמון |
| בארץ צמון | כאשר |
| אשר | בבקר ורע |
| כל בקר ורע | ושוב לעינים לחיות את השמש |
| ושוב לעינים ויחור לראי השמש | וישיבך לבך בימי בחורחך |
| וישיבך לבך | השחרות |
| ולא דעת | והאור הירח |
| ואור הירח | וינאץ השקד |
| יניץ עליו השקד ויניץ השקד | וחפר האביונה |
| וחפר האביונה וחפר האביונה | בית עלמו |
| בית עלמו | עוד למד |
| שלמד | בקש קהלת |
| הרבה בקש קהלת | בעלי מסות |
| בעלי מסות | הכל נשמע |
| כל שמע | כי זה כל האדם |
| כי זה מרעה אחד נתן לכל אדם | על כל נעלם |
| על כל נעלם ונגלה | |

Now a careful analysis of these variations between the Syriac and the Hebrew will shew that they may be traced to the following sources:—

1. Hagadic influence (ii. 12. 15. 16; iii. 15. 19; iv. 17; v. 1; vi. 8; vii. 21; x. 19; xii. 5).
2. Carelessness of transcribers (iii. 6; xi. 1. 2; xii. 11. 13); mistaking letters that resemble one another (vii. 12; viii. 4).
3. Later additions, e.g., the superscription, &c.
4. A desire to have the same verb as a similar phrase in the corresponding clauses of the verses i. 8; ii. 2.

5. Glaring mistakes, which arose from inadvertency (ii. 7; viii. 8); from marginal glosses (viii. 17; x. 19; xii. 5); from joining clauses (ii. 7; vii. 2).
6. The translator mistook the roots (iii. 18; vii. 11; x. 10).
7. Bad renderings on the part of the translator (vii. 24; viii. 7. 16; xi. 7; xii. 2); or made by another hand (xi. 10; xii. 6. 13).
8. Omissions (v. 3. 7; vi. 12; vii. 28; viii. 2. 12; ix. 7. 9. 14; x. 10; xi. 9).
9. Additions by way of explanation, some good (v. 3. 10. 15. 17; vi. 12; vii. 1. 8; ix. 15; x. 1. 15; xi. 3. 6; xii. 14); some bad (v. 6. 18. 19; vii. 4; ix. 2; x. 19).
10. Better readings than the Hebrew (ii. 7. 11; viii. 8).

It must also be added that a comparison of i. 10. 13; ii. 3. 15; v. 6. 16; vii. 2. 21; viii. 4; ix. 1. 2. 9; x. 10; xi. 10. 13, with the Septuagint's renderings of these passages, will convince the most cursory reader that a later and unskilful hand has been tampering with the Syriac, trying to make it agree with the Septuagint. Chapter xi. 10, where the barbarous and non-Syriac ܠܕܝܢ ܡܝܢ is put in for the Hebrew וּמִן הַיָּמִין , to answer to the Septuagint's $\delta\iota\alpha$, shews that the masterly Syrian who translated Coheleth had nothing to do with it.

F. THE OLD ITALIC.

The Old Italic Version forms the basis of the one on which St. Jerome wrote the *Commentarium ad Paulam et Eustochium*. St. Jerome indeed declares, in the preface to this commentary, "I followed nobody's authority; but though I translated from the Hebrew, I at the same time adapted my translation to the manner of the Septuagint in such things as did not differ much from the Hebrew;" yet a careful analysis of it will shew that the words of the Father must not be interpreted strictly, and that his version is a patchwork of the Hebrew, the Septuagint, the Old Italic, Aquila, Theodotion, Symmachus, and the Midrash. That it is largely made up of Jewish traditions, we have seen in the Introduction (p. 3, &c.), and throughout the Commentary. A few instances will suffice to shew how St. Jerome drew upon the Greek versions, whether they were right or wrong. וְהָלַלְתָּ (i. 17) is rendered by Aquila πλάτας , by St. Jerome *errores*; נָחַץ (iv. 6), Symmachus μετὰ ἀναπαύσεως , St. Jerome *cum requie*; $\text{וְהָשִׁיבָה לְעֵינַי אֶתְּנוּ כִּי־יָד לִי לִשְׁוֹן}$ (v. 11), Symmachus $\text{ἐν τῇ πληροσύνῃ τοῦ πληροῦς οὐκ ἔξασθενῶν}$, St. Jerome *et saturitas divitis non sinit eum dormire*; וְנָחַץ יָדוֹ (xii. 10), Aquila and Symmachus $\text{συνίγραψεν ἐπὶ τῶν}$, St. Jerome *scriberet recte*. The fact, however, that St. Jerome has thoroughly espoused the Hagadic mode of interpretation, and incorporated in his commentary so many of the Hagadic expositions, renders his writings important for historical purposes, inasmuch as the Jewish traditions preserved by him frequently furnish us with the clue to the sources whence the Septuagint derived its renderings.

G. THE VULGATE.

Three years after the publication of the above commentary, St. Jerome finished the translation of Coheleth contained in the Vulgate. When we add to what has already been said about his approving the Hagadic explanations and drawing upon the different Greek versions, that he only took three days to translate the three reputed books of Solomon, viz., Proverbs,

Cheleth, and the Song of Songs, as he informs Bishops Chromatius and Heliodorus,¹ we shall not wonder that the Vulgate on Coheleth—

1. Has largely copied the Hagadic explanations (i. 15; ii. 12. 17; iv. 1; vi. 8; vii. 3. 6. 12. 14; ix. 3. 6; x. 17. 19; xi. 3); and also taken words in a double sense (viii. 18; x. 10), according to the same mode of interpretation.
2. Misunderstood the usage of phrases (i. 16, 17)
3. Altered words and whole sentences (i. 10; ii. 12; viii. 10; x. 10. 18), sometimes to avoid apparent discrepancies (viii. 13), and sometimes omitting them altogether (i. 5; ii. 12; iv. 2; viii. 4).
4. Abounds in inconsistencies (i. 9 with iii. 15; iv. 7), and loose and unaccountable paraphrases (ii. 3. 16; iii. 9; vii. 12).
5. Has largely copied Symmachus, whose version St. Jerome greatly admired. Comp. אֵיךְ שׁוֹב . . . חֲזַרְתִּי בְלִי . . . חֲזַרְתִּי בְלִי (ii. 3) Symmachus καὶ ἐνέβηεν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μου . . . ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μου μεταγάγω εἰς σοφίαν . . . ποῖον δὲ σύμφορον, the Vulgate *cogitavi in corde meo* . . . *ut animum meum transferrem ad sapientiam* . . . *quid esset utile*; אֵיךְ שׁוֹב אֵיךְ שׁוֹב (v. 17), Symmachus ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἴδμεν, the Vulgate *hoc itaque visum est mihi*; וְשִׁמְשׁוֹ אֵיךְ שׁוֹב (v. 18), Symmachus καὶ ἀπολαύσαι τῆς μερίδος αὐτῶν, the Vulgate *et fruatur parte sua*; וְשִׁמְשׁוֹ אֵיךְ שׁוֹב (vii. 7), Symmachus θεωρήσεις σοφίαν, the Vulgate *conturbat sapientem*; וְשִׁמְשׁוֹ אֵיךְ שׁוֹב (viii. 5), Symmachus οὐ πειραθίσεται, the Vulgate *non experietur*; וְשִׁמְשׁוֹ אֵיךְ שׁוֹב (viii. 11), Symmachus ἀφ' ὧν καρδία, the Vulgate *abque timore*. It will be seen that all these are instances of departure from the literal meaning of the text, and that there is, therefore, no other way of accounting for this extraordinary agreement in the loose renderings, than that the later paraphrast copied the earlier one. St. Jerome has also adopted many of Symmachus' good renderings. Comp. קָלֶלְךָ (vii. 21), Symmachus ποιοῦντός σε, the Vulgate *maledicentem tibi*; וְשִׁמְשׁוֹ אֵיךְ שׁוֹב (viii. 10), Symmachus ὡς δικαία πράξαντες, the Vulgate *quasi justorum operum*.

For further strictures upon the Vulgate we must refer to the Commentary, where its peculiarities have been noticed in their respective places. We would only add, that too much stress cannot be laid upon the necessity of tracing the sources of the Vulgate, and of forming a true estimate of its merits and demerits, inasmuch as the Reformers, in their translations, have drawn largely upon this version.

H. THE CHALDEE PARAPHRASE.

The importance of this paraphrase to historical exegesis is incalculable, inasmuch as it contains the Hagadic interpretation of Coheleth, and gives us the sources of all the preceding versions. Through it, many of the obscure passages in the Septuagint, Aquila, Theodotion, Symmachus, the Vulgate, the Syriac, &c., become intelligible, as has been shewn in different parts of the Commentary. Convinced that a more extensive comparison of it with the ancient versions than the limits of our Commentary have permitted us to institute, will greatly contribute to the criticism of these versions, we subjoin a literal translation of the whole Chaldee paraphrase, and only wish that we could also give a translation of the Midrashim on

¹ Itaque regrotatione fractus, ne penitus hoc anno reticerem, et apud vos mutus essem, tridui opus nomini vestro consecravi, interpretationem videlicet trium Salominis voluminum, Masloth . . . Cohelet . . . Sirhassirim. Pref. in libb Salomonis.

Cheleth, which would have shewn to a still greater extent how much the old translations and the modern versions which follow them are indebted to the Hagada—

1. THE words of prophecy which Coheleth, that is, the son of David the King, who was in Jerusalem, prophesied. When Solomon the King of Israel foresaw, by the spirit of prophecy, the kingdom of Rehoboam his son, which will be divided with Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and that Jerusalem and the holy temple will be destroyed, and that the people of Israel will be led into captivity, he said by the divine word, Vanity of vanities is this world! vanity of vanities is all which I and my father David have laboured for, all of it is vanity! What advantage is there to a man, after his death, from all his labour which he laboured under the sun in this world, except he studied the word of God, in order to receive a good reward in the world to come from before the Lord of the world? King Solomon said, by the spirit of prophecy, The good generation of the righteous departs from the world because of the sins of the wicked generation that is to follow them, but the earth abides for ever and ever, to reserve the punishment which is to come upon the world, on account of the sins of the children of men. And the sun rises in the day from the east, and the sun goes down in the west by night, and hastens to its place, and goes through the path under the sea, and rises the following day from the place where it rested yesterday; it goes all the side of the south in the day, and goes round to the side of the north by night, through the path under the sea; it turns round and round to the wind of the south corner in the revolution of Nisan and Tamuz, and returns on its circuits to the wind of the north corner in the revolution of Tishri and Tebeth; it comes through the windows of the east in the morning, and goes into the windows of the west in the evening. All the rivers and streams of water go and flow into the waters of the ocean which surround the world like a ring, and the ocean is not full, and to the place where the streams go and flow there they go again through the channels of the sea. The ancient prophets have exerted themselves in all the things which will take place in the world, and they could not find out their end; therefore, a man has no power to declare what will be after him, neither can the eye see all that is to be in the world, nor can the ear be filled with hearing all the words of the inhabitants of the earth. What was aforetime, the same will be afterwards again, and what was done aforetime the same will be done again to the end of all generations, and there is no new thing in the world under the sun. There may be something of which a man says, Behold, this is a new thing, but it has been long ago, in the generations which were before us. There is no remembrance of former generations, and also of the coming ones that will be, there will be no remembrance of them among the generations which will be in the days of the King Messiah. When King Solomon was sitting upon the throne of his kingdom, his heart became very proud of his riches, and he transgressed the word of God, and he gathered many horses, and chariots, and riders, and he amassed much gold and silver, and he married from foreign nations, whereupon the anger of the Lord was kindled against him, and he sent to him Ashmoda the king of the demons, who drove him from the throne of his kingdom, and took away the ring from his hand, in order that he should roam and wander about in the world to reprove it; and he went about in the provincial towns and the cities of the land of Israel, weeping and lamenting, and saying, I am Coheleth, whose name was formerly called Solomon, who was king over Israel in Jerusalem: and I gave my heart to ask

instruction from God at the time when he appeared unto me in Gibeon, to try me, and to ask me what I desire of him, and I asked nothing of him except wisdom, to know the difference between good and evil, and knowledge of whatsoever was done under the sun in this world, and I saw all the works of the wicked children of men,—a bad business which

14 God gave to the children of men to be afflicted by it: I saw all the works of the children of men which were done under the sun in this

15 world; behold, all is vanity and breaking of the spirit. A man whose ways are perverted in this world, and who dies therein and does not repent, has no power to become right after his death; and whoso departs from the law and the precepts in his life, has no power to be

16 numbered with the righteous in paradise after his death. I spake with the thoughts of my heart, saying: I, behold! I have increased and multiplied wisdom above all the wise who were before me in Jerusalem,

17 and my heart has seen much wisdom and knowledge; and I gave my heart to know wisdom, and the fear of the Kingdom, and knowledge and discretion, I know it by experience that even this is a breaking of the

18 spirit to the man who is employed to find them out. Because a man who increases his knowledge when he is guilty, and does not repent, increases the anger of God; and he who accumulates wisdom and dies in his youth, increases the sadness of heart to his relations.

ii. 1 I said in my heart, I will go now and try mirth, and behold the good of this world; and when pain and affliction befell me, I said by the divine

2 word, Also this is vanity. To laughter I said, in time of affliction, It is mockery; and to mirth, What profit is it to the man who indulges in it?

3 I tried in my heart to enrapture my flesh in the house of the feast of wine, and my heart conducted with wisdom, and to seize the folly of youth, until I examined and saw which of them was good for the children of men, that they may do while they abide in this world under the heavens, the number of the days of their life. I multiplied good works in Jerusalem.

4 I built houses, viz., the temple, to make atonement for Israel, and a royal palace, and the conclave, and the porch, and a house of judgment of hewn stones, where the wise men sit, and the judges, to give judgment; I made a throne of ivory for the sitting of royalty; I planted vineyards in Jabne, that I and the Rabbis of the Sanhedrin might drink wine, and

5 also to make libations of wine, new and old, upon the altar; I made watered gardens and parks, and I sowed there all kinds of herbs, some for food, some for drink, and some for medicine, and all kinds of aromatics; I planted therein sterile trees, and aromatic trees, which the spectres and evil spirits brought me from India, and all kinds of fruit-bearing trees; and its boundary was from the wall of the city of Jerusalem to the margin of the river Silonh; I made receptacles of water, whence to water the trees and the herbs; I made pools of water, to water

7 from them even the thicket which produces fine wood; I bought bond-men and bond-women from the children of Ham, and other foreign nations; and I had officers placed over the eatables of my house, to provide for me and the people of my house food twelve months of the year, and one to provide for me during the leap-year; I had also cattle

8 and sheep more than all generations before me in Jerusalem; I gathered also treasures of silver and gold; even right weights and measures I made from good gold; and the treasures of kings and provinces were given to me as tribute; I made for the temple musical instruments, that the Levites might play them at the sacrifices, and citherns and flutes that the male and female singers might play them in the wine house, and the delights of the children of men; and warm springs, and baths,

channels pouring out cold water, and channels pouring out warm water; and I multiplied goods and increased riches more than all generations before me in Jerusalem, because my wisdom stood with me and assisted me; and whatsoever the Rabbis of the Sanhedrin asked of me respecting pure and impure, innocent and guilty, I did not withhold from them any explanation of these things; and I did not keep my heart from the joy of the law, because I had the inclination of heart to enjoy the wisdom given me by God more than any man, and rejoiced in it more than in all my labour; and this was my good portion which was assigned to me, so that I might receive for it a good reward in the world to come, more than for

11 all my labour. And I considered all my works which my hands had worked, and my labours which I had laboured to do, and behold! it was all vanity and breaking of spirit; but I shall have full reward for good work in the sun in this world; and there is no profit in them under

12 world to come. And I gave attention to consider wisdom, and the fear of the kingdom and understanding, because what use is there to a man to pray after the decree of the King, and after retribution? behold!

13 it is then already decreed about him and executed on him. And I saw by the spirit of prophecy that there is an advantage to wisdom over folly, above the advantage of the light of the day over the darkness of

14 night. The wise man reflects in the beginning what there will be at last, and prays and averts the evil decree from the world; while the fool walks in darkness; and I also know that if the wise man does not pray, and avert the evil decree from the world, when retribution shall come upon the world, the same destiny shall befall them all. And I said in my heart, a destiny like that of Saul, the son of Kish, the king, who turned aside, and did not keep the commandment given to him about Amalek, and the kingdom was taken from him, will also befall me; and why then am I wiser than he? And I said in my heart, that also this

16 is vanity, and there is nothing except the decree of the Lord. For the remembrance of the wise man is not with the fool in the world to come, for after the death of a man, that which happened long ago in his lifetime, when the days come which are to follow him after his death, everything will be disclosed; and why, then, say the children of men that the

17 end of the righteous is like that of the wicked? And I hated all evil life, because the evil work which is done against the children of men under the sun in this world displeased me, for it is all vanity, and breaking of

18 spirit. And I hated all my labour which I laboured under the sun in this world, for I must leave it to Rehoboam my son, who comes after me, and Jeroboam his servant will come and take away out of his hands ten

19 tribes, and will possess half of the kingdom. And who knows whether wise or foolish will be the king who is to be after me, and reign over all my labour which I laboured in this world, and over all which I accomplish in my wisdom under the sun in this world? and I was confounded

20 in my heart, and again said: This, too, is vanity. And I turned about to despair respecting all my labour which I laboured to acquire, and

21 was wise to accomplish under the sun in this world. Because there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, reason, and justice, and he dies without issue; and to a man who did not labour for it, he is to give it, that

22 it may be his portion; also this is vanity, and a great evil. For what pleasure has this man for all his labour and breaking of his heart,

23 wherewith he laboured under the sun in this world? For all his days are sorrowful, and his business kindles his anger, even in the night he sleeps not on account of the thoughts of his heart; this too is vanity.

24 There is nothing comely for a man but that he eat, drink, and make his

soul see good before the sons of men, in order to do the commandments, to walk in the straight path before him, so that it may be well with him from his labour; also this I saw, that if a man prospers in this world, it is from the hand of the Lord, who decrees it so for him. For who is occupied with the words of the law, and who is the man that has anxiety about the great day of judgment which is to come, besides me? For to the man whose works are straight before God, he gave wisdom and knowledge in this world, and joy with the righteous in the world to come; and to the wicked he gave all evil employment, to gather money and to heap up much wealth, to be taken away from him, and to be given to him who pleases the Lord; this, too, is vanity for the wicked, and breaking of spirit.

iii. 1 To every man comes a time, and to every thing an opportune season under the sun. There is a special time to beget sons and daughters, and a special time for killing disobedient and perverse children, to kill them with stones according to the decree of the judges; and an opportune time for planting a tree, and an opportune time for rooting up a planted tree: an opportune time for killing in war, and an opportune time for healing the sick; an opportune time to destroy a building, and an opportune time to build up a ruin: a time to bewep the dead, and an opportune time to be joyful with laughter; an opportune time to mourn over the slain, and an opportune time to dance at nuptials: an opportune time to throw away a heap of stones, and an opportune time to gather stones for a building; an opportune time to embrace a wife, and an opportune time to abstain from embracing her, in the seven days of mourning: an opportune time to wish for riches, and an opportune time to lose riches; an opportune time to keep merchandise, and an opportune time to throw merchandise into the sea, during a great storm: an opportune time to tear the garment for the dead, and an opportune time to sew together the torn pieces: an opportune time to be silent and not to rebuke, and an opportune time to speak words of reproof: an opportune time to love each other, and an opportune time to hate the wicked: an opportune time to make war, and an opportune time to restore peace. What advantage has the toiling man, who labours to make treasures, and to gather mammon, unless he is helped by Providence from above? I saw the painful business and punishment which the Lord gave to the children of men who are wicked, to afflict them therewith. King Solomon said by the spirit of prophecy, God made everything beautiful in its time; for it was opportune that there should be the strife which was in the days of Jeroboam, son of Neboth; it was to have been in the days of Sheba, son of Bichri, and it was delayed, and came to pass in the days of Jeroboam, son of Nebat; for if it had been in the days of Sheba, son of Bichri, the temple would not have been built, because of the golden calves which the wicked Jeroboam made, and placed one in Beth-el and one in Dan; and put watches on the road, and they stopped the pilgrims to the feasts; and therefore it was delayed up to the time when the temple was built, in order not to hinder Israel to build it. He concealed from them also the great Name written and expressed on the foundation-stone, the evil inclinations in their hearts being known to Him; for if it had been delivered into the hands of men, they would have used it, and found by it what will come to pass in the latter days, world without end: and He also hid from them the day of death, in order that it should not be known to man from the beginning what will come to pass at the end.

12 King Solomon said by the spirit of prophecy, I know that there is

nothing good among the children of men, but that they rejoice in the joy of the Law, and do good in the days of their life. And also that if any man eats and drinks and sees good in his days, and causes his children to inherit all his labour in the time of his death, this is a gift given to him from the Lord. I know by the spirit of prophecy, that every thing which the Lord does in the world, whether good or evil, whatsoever is decreed from His mouth, will be for ever; to it man has no power to add, nor has any one power to take from it; and at the same time, when punishment comes into the world, it is the Lord who does it, that the children of man may fear before Him. What has been from the beginning has come to pass; and what will be at the end of days has already happened; and at the great day of judgment the Lord will demand the poor and the needy from the hands of the wicked who persecuted him.

16 And further, I saw under the sun in this world, the place of judgment, in which false judges condemn the innocent, in his judgment, in order to acquit the guilty; and the place where the innocent is found, there the guilty is to tyrannise over him, because of the guilt of the wicked generation. I said in my heart, that God will judge in the great day of judgment the righteous and the guilty, because a time is appointed for every thing, and for every work done in this world they will be judged there. I said in my heart concerning the children of men, as to the chastisements and evil events which come upon them, God sends these to try and to prove them, to see whether they will return in repentance and be forgiven and healed; but the wicked who are like beasts do not repent, therefore they are reprov'd thereby to their own condemnation. For as to the destiny of the wicked, and the destiny of the unclean beast, it is one destiny for both of them; and as the unclean beast dies, so he dies who does not return in repentance before his death; and the breath of life of both is judged alike in every manner, and the advantage of a sinner over the unclean beast is nothing but the burial place; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all the inhabitants of the earth are made of dust, and when they die, all return to the dust. Who is wise to know the breathing spirit of the children of men, whether it goes upward to heaven, and the breathing spirit of cattle, whether it goes down to the earth? I saw, therefore, that there is no good in this world, but that man should rejoice in his good works, and eat and drink, and do good to his heart; because this is his good part in this world, to acquire thereby the world to come, so that no man should say in his heart, "Why am I distributing money to do charity? I had better leave it to my son after me, or be nursed for it in my old age;" because who can bring him to see what will be after him?

iv. 1 And I turned and saw all the oppressions which are done to the righteous in this world under the sun, from the hand of their oppressors; and there is none that should speak consolation to them; and there is none to deliver them from the hand of their oppressors with strong hand and power, and none comforts them. And I praised the dead who have long since died, and do not see the punishment which comes into the world after their death, more than the living, who live in this world in so much misery, till now. And better than both of them is he who has not lived till now, and has not been created, who does not see the bad doings which are done in this world under the sun. And I saw all the trouble and every good work which the children of men do, to be nothing but jealousy, man emulating his neighbour, to do like him; he who emulates his neighbour to do good like him, the word of heaven will do him good; and if he emulate him in evil, to do like his badness,

the word of heaven will do him evil; and also these things are vanity for
 5 the wicked, and breaking of spirit. The fool goes and folds his hands in
 summer, and will not labour; and in winter eats all he has, even the
 6 garment from the skin of his flesh. Better for a man one handful of
 food with comfort of soul, and without rapine and violence, than two
 handfuls of eating with rapine and violence, which in future will be
 7 requited in the judgment in labour and breaking of spirit. And I
 turned and saw the vanity which is destined to be in this world under
 8 the sun. There is a solitary man, and no second besides him, he has
 even no son nor brother to inherit his property, and there is no end to
 all his labour, and even his eye cannot be satisfied with his riches, and
 he does not say to his heart, "Why am I labouring and restraining my
 soul from good? I will arise now, and will do charity therefrom, and
 will be joyful in this world with the children of men, and with the
 righteous in the world to come;" this, too, is vanity, and an evil work.
 9 Better two righteous in a generation than one, and it is they who lead
 successfully, and cause their words to be heard; they have a good
 reward in the world to come for their labours which they laboured to
 10 sustain their generation. For if one of them falls upon the bed and lies
 sick, the other will cause his friend to rise by his prayer; but if there is
 only one innocent man in a generation, if he falls upon the bed and lies
 11 sick, he has no companion in his generation to pray for him, yet shall he
 rise by his own merit from his sickness. Also if two sleep together—a man
 and his wife, they will be warm in the winter; but one, how can he be
 12 warm? And if a wicked and strong man rises in a generation, and his
 works are injurious, and cause punishments to come in the world, two
 righteous shall stand up against him, and abolish the punishment by
 their merits; and how much more useful are three righteous who are in
 a generation, and peace is among them, like a chain that is woven of
 13 three-fold cords, which does not easily break. Better, *i. e.*, Abraham—
 who is the poor youth, and in whom was the spirit of prophecy from the
 Lord, and to whom the Lord was known when three years old, and
 who would not worship an idol—than the wicked Nimrod, who was an old
 and foolish king. And because Abraham would not worship an idol, he
 threw him into the burning furnace, and a miracle was performed for
 him from the Lord of the world, and he delivered him from it; and even
 14 after this, Nimrod had no sense to be admonished not to worship the idol
 which he worshipped before. For Abraham went out from the family of
 idolaters, and reigned over the land of Canaan, for even in the reign of
 15 Abraham, Nimrod became poor in the world. King Solomon said, By
 the spirit of prophecy from the Lord, I foresaw all the living who walk
 in their folly rebel against Rehoboam, my son, under heaven, and
 divide his kingdom to give it to Jeroboam, son of Nebat—except the
 tribes of Benjamin and Judah, whose heart was faithful with the boy,
 that is, Rehoboam my son, who, second in my kingdom, is to rise and
 16 reign in Jerusalem, the place of his inheritance. There was no end to
 all the house of Israel, to all the righteous before whom he ruled; but
 they advised him in their wisdom to lighten their yoke, and he in his
 folly went and took counsel with the youth, and they in their folly,
 advised him to make heavier the yoke of his kingdom upon the people
 of the house of Israel, and he left the advice of the aged, and followed
 the advice of the latter; but these latter ones were afterwards confounded
 and displeased with him, and they caused him to flee, so that the ten
 tribes should separate from him; and the wicked Jeroboam ruled over
 them; I said this too is vanity for Rehoboam my son, and breaking of

17 spirit to him. Thou son of man, guard thy feet when thou goest to the
 sanctuary of the Lord to pray, so that thou goest not there full of sin
 before thou has repented, and incline thine ear to receive the teaching
 of the Law from the priests and sages, and be not like fools, who bring
 sacrifices for their sins, and do not leave off their evil works which they
 hold in their hands, and they have no acceptance, for they know not
 whether they do good or evil therewith.
 v. 1 Do not hurry on thy language so as to make a mistake in the
 words of thy mouth, and let not thy heart make a vow, resolving
 to do something at the time when thou prayest before the Lord, for
 the Lord rules over all the world, and sits upon the throne of glory
 in the high heavens, and thou sittest on earth, therefore let the words
 2 of thy mouth be few. For as a dream comes through the thoughts
 of the heart engaged in a multitude of business, so the noise of
 3 the fool through the multitude of empty words. When thou vowest a
 vow before the Lord, do not defer to pay it, for the Lord hath no
 pleasure in fools, because they defer their vows and do not pay, but
 4 thou, whatsoever thou vowest, pay. It is better for thee that thou
 5 vowest not, than that thou vowest and pay not. Do not degrade the
 words of thy mouth to cause judgments of Gehenna upon thy flesh; and
 in the day of the great judgment thou wilt not be able to say before the
 avenging angel who exercises dominion over thee, that it is an error;
 6 why then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against the voice of thy
 shamefully uttered language, and destroy the works of thine hand? For
 in the multitude of the dreams of the false prophets, and in the vanities
 of sorcerers, and in the many words of the wicked, believe not, but serve
 the wise and the just; from them seek instruction, and fear before the
 7 Lord. When thou seest the oppression of the poor, robbery, and justice
 in the city, be not astonished in thy heart, saying, How can the will of
 the Lord be with all this? for the mighty God from on high watches the
 works of the children of men, whether good or evil, and from his presence
 are sent forth proud and powerful men to rule over the wicked, and to be
 8 appointed masters over them. And the great advantage of cultivating
 the land is above all, for when the subjects of a country revolt, and the
 king flies from them into the country, if he has no more to eat, this very
 9 king becomes subject to a labourer in the field. A merchant who loves
 to acquire money, and men of business, shall not be satisfied in amassing
 money; and he who loves to heap up great mammon, has no praise in
 the world to come, unless he has done charity with it, because he has not
 10 deserved to eat fruit; this, too, is vanity. When good is multiplied in
 the world, the children of men who eat it are also multiplied; and what
 advantage is there to the owner who gathers it unless he does good with
 it, that he may see in the world to come the reward given with his eyes.
 11 Sweet is the sleep of a man who serves the Lord of the world with all
 his heart; and he has rest in his grave, whether he lives few years or
 many years; after having served the Lord of the world in this world, he
 will inherit in the world to come a reward for the works of his hand.
 And the wisdom of the Law of God belongs to the man who is rich in
 wisdom; in the same manner as he occupies himself with it in this world,
 and exerts himself in learning, so will it rest with him in the grave, and
 not leave him alone; just as a woman does not leave her husband to
 12 sleep alone. There is a sore evil which I saw in this world under the
 sun, and there is no remedy for it; a man who gathers riches and does
 no good with them, and at the end of days these riches are kept for him for
 13 his condemnation in the world to come. And the riches, which he leaves

- to his son after his death, shall perish, because he got them in an evil employment, and they shall not abide in the hand of the son whom he has begotten, and nothing whatever shall remain in his hand. As he came out of his mother's womb naked, without a covering, and without any good, so shall he return to his grave, void of merit, just as he came into this world; and he shall receive no good reward whatever for his labour, to carry with him into the world whither he goes, to be a merit in his hand.
- 15 And this also is a sore evil, and there is no remedy for it, as he came into this world void of merit, so he shall depart into that world; and what advantage has he that he laboured for his spirit? Also all his days he dwells in darkness, that he may eat his bread alone, and he sees in much indignation, and his life is in sickness and vexation. And behold that which I have seen good for the children of men, and that which is comely for them to do in this world, that they eat and drink from their labours, in order not to put forth the hand to oppression and rapine, and to keep the words of the law, and to have compassion on the poor, so that they may see good in all their labours wherewith they labour in this world under the sun, the number of the days of a man's life, which God in his providence gives to him; for this is his portion, and none's beside him. Also every man to whom the Lord has given riches and wealth, and if the Lord gave him power to eat of it in this world, and to do good with it, and to receive a full reward in the world to come, and to rejoice in his work with the righteous, behold! this is a gift which is given to him in providence, it is from the Lord. For not many are the days of man's life; who tries to find out the days of his life, how many of them will be good, and how many of them will be evil? because it is not in the power of the children of men; but it is fixed about him from the Lord, how many days he shall suffer, and how many days he shall be in the joy of his heart.
- vii. 1 There is an evil which I saw in this world under the sun, and it is great upon the children of man. A man to whom God gave in his providence riches, honour, and wealth, and his soul lacks nothing of all which he desires, and the Lord has not given him power, on account of his sins, to enjoy it; but he dies without issue, and his kinsman would not take possession of his inheritance, wherefore his wife will be married to a stranger, and he will take away the inheritance and consume it; all this his sins have brought upon him, because he did therewith no good whatever, and his riches turned out to be to him vanity and a sore evil.
- 2 If a man should beget a hundred children, and live many years, and be in power and dominion all the days of his life, and his soul has not enjoyed the good which he has, because he loved his riches, and has not acquired therewith a good name, nor even prepared himself a grave, I say by the divine word, better than he an untimely birth, which has not seen this world. For in vanity he came into this world, and departs in darkness into that world; and in darkness is his name covered, because he has no merit, and has not acquired a good name worthy of remembrance.
- 3 And even the light of the sun he saw not, and did not know good from evil, to discern between this world and the world to come. And if the days of the life of this man were two thousand years, and he had not studied the Law, and had not done judgment and justice by the oath of the word of the Lord, in the day of his death his soul will go to Gehenna, to the same place whither all sinners go. As for all the labours of man, he labours for the food of his mouth; and by the word of the mouth of the Lord he is sustained, and even the soul of man is not satisfied with eating and drinking. For what advantage has the wise

- man in this world over the fool, because of the wicked generation by which he is not accepted; and what is this poor man to do but to study the law of the Lord, that he may know how he will have to walk in the presence of the righteous in paradise. It is better for a man to rejoice about the world to come, and to do righteousness, and to see a good reward for his labours in the day of the great judgment, than to go into that world with an afflicted soul; for this is vanity, and a breaking of spirit to a guilty man. That which has been in the world, behold! its name has long been called, and has been made known to the children of men from the day that the first Adam existed, and all is the decree of the Lord; and men cannot stand in judgment with the Lord of the world, who is stronger than he. For there are many things which multiply vanity in the world, what advantage has the man who is occupied with them? For who is he that knows what will do men good in this world, but to study the Law, which is the life of the world; and all the number of the days of his vain life which he lives, are in the time of his death considered like a shadow; for who is he that can tell man what there is before him in this world under the sun?
- vii. 1 Better the good name which the righteous acquire in this world, than the anointing oil which was poured upon the heads of kings and priests; and the day wherein a man dies and departs to the grave with a good name and merits, than the day wherein the wicked is born into the world. It is better to go to a mourning man to comfort him, than to go to the house of a feast of wine of the scorners; for into the house of mourning thither is the end of all men to go, for upon all is decreed the decree of death, and by going into the house of mourning the righteous man sits down and takes to heart the words of death; and if there be any evil in his hand he will leave it, and return in repentance before the Lord of the world. Better is the anger wherewith the Lord of the world is angry with the righteous in this world, than the laughter wherewith he laughs at the wicked; for by the displeasure of the face of the Shechinah come famine and punishment into the world to improve the heart of the righteous, and they pray before the Lord of the world, who has mercy upon them. The heart of the wise mourns over the destruction of the temple, and grieves over the captivity of the house of Israel; and the heart of fools is in the joy of the house of their scoffings; they eat and drink and fare sumptuously, and do not take to heart the affliction of their brethren. Better to sit at the teaching of the house of instruction, and to hear the reproof of the wise in the Law, than for a man to go to hear the sound of a musical instrument of a fool. For as the sound of the crackling of thorns which burn under a pot, so is the noisy laughter of the fool; this also is vanity.
- 7 For the robber mocks at the wise man because he goes not in his way, and destroys with his evil speech the prudent heart of the wise, which was given to him as a gift from heaven. Better the end of a thing than the beginning thereof, for in its beginning man knows not what its end will be, but the end of a good thing is known to a good man; and better before the Lord is a man who rules over his spirit and subdues his carnal thoughts, than a man who walks in the pride of his spirit. And when chastisements from heaven come upon thee, do not hasten thy heart to anger, and to utter words of rebellion against heaven, for if thou bearest them patiently, they will depart from thee; and if thou art rebellious and angry, know that anger rests in the lap of fools till it has destroyed them. In the time of oppression, say not what was before now was good in the world; for the former days were better, and the

men of that generation had better doings than these, therefore good came to them; and thou askest not according to wisdom about this. Good is the wisdom of the law, along with the inheritance of money, and better still for a man to humbly conduct himself with men, the dwellers of the earth, who see good and evil under the sun in this world. For as a man is sheltered under the shadow of wisdom, so he is sheltered under the shadow of money, when he does alms with it; and the advantage of knowing the wisdom of the law is that it raises its possessor from the grave for the world to come. Consider the work of the Lord, and his strength, who made the blind, the hunchback, and the lame, to be wonders in the world; for who is he that can make straight one of these, but the Lord of the world who made him crooked? In the day when the Lord is doing good, be thou also happy and do good to all the world; that the evil day may not come upon thee, see and behold! and also God has made this against that to reprove the men of the world, so that man should not find after him any evil in the world to come. All this I saw in the days of my vanity, that from the Lord are decreed good and evil to be in the world, according to the planets under which the children of men are created; for there is a righteous man perishing in his righteousness in this world, and his merit is kept for him for the world to come; and there is a wicked man who prolongs his days in his guilt, and the account of his evil doings is kept for him for the world to come, to be requited for it in the day of the great judgment. Be not over-righteous when the guilty is found guilty of death in thy court of judgment, so as to have compassion on him and not to kill him; and do not thus become over-wise with the wisdom of the wicked who stand in the way, and do not learn their ways; why, then, wilt thou destroy thy way? Go not after the thought of thy heart to sin much, and do not make thy way far from the teaching of the law of God to become a fool; why shouldst thou cause death to thy soul, and the years of thy life be shortened to die, before thy time comes to die? It is good thou shouldst combine the affairs of this world, namely, to do good to thyself in the way of merchants, and also that thou hold fast thy portion in the Book of the Law, for a man fearing before the Lord performs the duty of both. And the wisdom of Joseph, son of Jacob, helped him to make him wise before his ten righteous brethren, who ruled in the fear of the Lord; and the evil spirit did not rule in them when they were in the metropolis of Egypt, and did not kill their brother Joseph who annoyed them at that time with the voice of his words. For there is no righteous man in the land, who does good all his days, and sins not before the Lord; but the man who sins before the Lord, it behoves him to return in repentance before he dies. Moreover give not thy heart to accept all the words which the wicked speak to thee, that the days may not come when thou shalt hear thy servant curse thee, and thou hast not the power to be delivered from his hands. Then see to it, adjudicate thy cause when a man curses thee who is not like thyself; for also many times thy heart knows that thou too hast cursed other men. All that I said I have tried by wisdom: I said by my word, I shall also be wise in all the wisdom of the Law, but it was far from me. Behold, long has it been far from the children of men to know all that has been from the days of old; and who is he that will find out by his wisdom the secret of the day of death, and the secret of the day when the King Messiah will come? I turned to think in my heart, and to know and to examine and to seek wisdom, and the estimate of the reward of the works of the righteous, and to know the punishment of the guilt of the fool, and the understand-

ing of the fear of the Kingdom. And I found a thing more bitter to man than the bitterness of the day of death, namely, a woman who causes much tribulation to her husband, and entangles him; in whose heart are snares, and whose hauds are bound that she might not work with them; the righteous before God is the man who gets rid of her by a bill of divorcement, and relieves himself of her; but the guilty before God is the man who abides with her, and is ensnared with her adultery. Behold, this is the work which I have found, said Coheleth, who is called Solomon, King of Israel, I have examined the planets one in connection with the other, to find out the account of the children of men, what will be in their end. There is another thing which my soul is still seeking, and I have not found, namely, a perfect and just man, without any corruption, as Abraham; from the days of the first Adam till the righteous Abraham was born, who was found faithful and just among the thousand kings that gathered together to build the tower of Babel? and a woman, as Sarah, among all the wives of those kings, I have not found. Only, behold! this I found, that God made the first Adam upright before him and just; and the serpent and Eve seduced him to eat of the fruit of the tree, because those who eat its fruit would be wise to discern between good and evil, and they brought upon him and all the inhabitants of the earth the day of death; and they sought to find many accounts in order to bring terror upon the inhabitants of the earth.

viii. 1 Who is as a wise man, that he can stand before the wisdom of the Lord, and know the interpretations of his words, like the prophets? The wisdom of a wise man enlightens the brightness of his face among the righteous, and as for the impudent, all his ways are changed from good to bad. Guard thy mouth about the commands of the King to keep whatsoever he commands, and be also on thy guard about the matter of an oath of the Lord, that thou swear not by the name of his word in vain. And in the time of the anger of the Lord do not cease to pray before him, tremble before him, go and pray and seek mercy from him, because thou canst not stand in an evil matter; for the Lord of all worlds, the Lord, will do what he pleases. In the place where the word of the King who rules over all the world is gone forth, it is done immediately, and who is the man that would restrain his hand, and say unto him, What doest thou? The man who keeps the commandments of the Lord shall not know any evil in the world to come; and the time of prayer, and judgment, and truth, is known in the heart of the wise. For to every business there is a good and an evil time, and by a true judgment is the whole world judged; and when it is decreed from the Lord that punishment should be in the world, it is because of the guilt of evil doers which is heavy upon them. For no wise man knows what will be with him at the end, for when it shall be the pleasure before the Lord to afflict him, who is he that will tell him it? There is no man who has power over his breathing soul to retain the soul of life, that it should not depart from the human body; and there is no power in the day of death for a man to save his companion, and no instruments of war to help in the battle, and guilt will not save its master in the great day of judgment. All this I saw which has happened in this world, and I gave my heart to know all the work which is worked in this world under the sun, at the time when man rules over man to afflict him. And indeed I have seen sinners who are buried and blotted out of the world, from the holy place where the righteous dwell, and went to be burned in Gehenna, and are forgotten from among the inhabitants of the city, and as they have done to others,

- 11 so it is done to them; also this is vanity. And because the evil thing, the punishment of the wicked, is not quickly executed upon their evil works, therefore the heart of the children of men is full in them to do
 12 evil in this world. And when a sinner does evil a hundred years, and space is given him from the Lord in order that he may repent, yet is it revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, and I know that it will be well in the world to come with those that fear the Lord, that fear before him,
 13 and do his will; and that it shall not be well with the wicked, and there shall be no space for him in the world to come; and in this world the days of his life shall be cut off, they shall fly and pass away like a
 14 shadow, because he feared not before the Lord. There is a vanity that is decreed to be done upon the face of the earth; there are righteous to whom evil happens as if they had done like the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked to whom it happens as if they had done like the works of the righteous; and I saw by the Holy Spirit that the evil which happens to the righteous in this world is not for their guilt, but to free them from a slight transgression, that their reward may be perfect in the world to come; and the good that comes to the sinners in this world is not for their merits, but to render them a reward for their small merit they have acquired, so that they may eat their reward in this world, and to destroy their portion in the world to come; I said, by my word, this
 15 also is vanity. And I praised the joy of the Law, since there is no good for man in this world under the sun, but to eat and drink and rejoice in his labour and in his portion, which is given to him from heaven, and not stretch out his hands in violence and rapine; and this will lead him to peace in that world, and he shall receive a perfect reward for his labours wherewith he sincerely laboured all the days of his life, which
 16 the Lord gave him in this world under the sun. As I gave my heart to know the wisdom of the Law, and to see the business which is done upon the earth, for even the wise who desires to be occupied with the Law and to find wisdom must toil, since he has no rest in the day, and sees no
 17 sleep with his eyes in the night. And I saw every mighty work of the Lord, for it is awful; and man cannot find out the mighty work of the Lord which is done in this world under the sun; when man labours to seek what will be, he shall not find it; and even if a wise man says by his word, that he will know what will be at the end of days, he cannot find it.
- ix. 1 For all this I have taken to heart, and to examine all this that the righteous and the wise, and their disciples who are under them, studying the law, are in the hand of the Lord, whatsoever will take place in the world in their day is decreed by him; the love wherewith a man loves, and the hatred wherewith he hates, there is no prophet in the world who knows it; whatever happens to man has been decreed beforehand, according to the planet, to take place. Everything depends upon the planets, whatever happens to anyone is fixed in heaven; the same destiny is to the innocent and to the guilty, to him who amends his ways and purifies his soul, and to him who defiles his soul, to him who brings a holy sacrifice, and to him who does not bring holy sacrifices, alike to the righteous and the sinner, to the man who perjures himself, and the
 3 man who fears an oath. This is a great misfortune in all the world, which occurs under the sun, some one fate is for all, for every inhabitant of the earth; and also the heart of the children of men is full of evil on account of it, and fear is in their hearts all the days of their lives, and after the end of man it is reserved for him to be reprov'd with the dead
 4 in the judgment of the guilty. For who is the man that adheres to all

- the words of the law, and has hope to acquire the life of the world to
 5 come? for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the righteous know that if they sin, they shall be regarded as dead men in the world to come, therefore they keep their ways and sin not; and if they sin they return in repentance; but the wicked do not know any good, for they do not make good their works in their life, and do not know any good in the world to come, and they have no good reward after their death,
 6 for their remembrances are forgotten from among the righteous. After the death of the wicked they are useless; their love, as well as their hatred and jealousy, behold, they have perished long ago from the world! and they have no more a good part with the righteous in the world to come, and they have no enjoyment from all that is done in this
 7 world under the sun. Solomon said, by the spirit of prophecy from the Lord, The Lord of the world will say to all the righteous in their face, go eat with joy the bread which has been laid up for thee for the bread which thou hast given to the poor and needy that were hungry, and drink with a good heart the wine which has been preserved for thee in paradise for the wine which thou has mingled to the poor and needy that were thirsty; for behold, thy good work has long been acceptable before
 8 the Lord. At all times let thy garment be white from all pollution of sin, and acquire a good name, which is likened to anointing oil, for the which a blessing will come down upon thy head, and thy goodness will
 9 not fail. See good life with the wife thou lovest, all the days of thy vain life, which the Lord, through destiny, has given thee in this world under the sun, for this is thy portion in life, and in the labour wherewith
 10 thou labourest in this world under the sun. Whatever good and charity thy hand finds to do, do it with all thy power, for after death there is no work for man, nor account, knowledge, or wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest; and nothing will help thee except good works and alms
 11 alone. King Solomon said, When I sat upon the throne of my kingdom, I considered and saw in this world under the sun that men who are swift as eagles are not helped by running to escape from death in battle, and that the mighty are not helped by carrying on war in their strength, nor are the wise helped by their wisdom to find bread in the time of famine, nor are the intelligent helped by their intelligence to gather riches, nor are the prudent helped by their prudence to find favour in the eyes of a king, for time and fate befall all according to their planets.
 12 For man knows not his time; whether that which will be in the world and come upon him will be good or evil; like fish of the sea which are caught in a net, and birds of heaven which are caught in a snare, so are the children of men taken in an evil time, which is appointed to fall
 13 upon them in a moment from heaven. Also this I saw, which is wisdom in this world under the sun, and it is great to me. The body of a man, which is like a small town; and in it are a few mighty men, just as the merits in the heart of man are few; and the evil spirit, who is like a great and powerful king, enters into the body to seduce it, and besieges the body to seduce it, and builds around it a place to lie in wait, because he wishes to cause him to depart from the way which is straight before the Lord, to catch him in the great snares of Gehenna, in order to burn
 15 him seven times for his sins. And there is found in the body a good spirit, humble and wise, and he prevails over him, and subdues him by his wisdom, saves the body from the judgment of Gehenna by his power and wisdom, like a man who makes war and delivers the inhabitants of the city by the wisdom of his heart; and man does not remember afterwards the good spirit who saved him, but says in his heart, I am

innocent; just as the inhabitants of that town do not remember the poor man who delivered them. And I said by my word, Better the wisdom of the righteous, than the force of the strength of the wicked; for the wisdom of the righteous and his merit save both him and the men of his generation; whilst the power of the wicked who persists in the stubbornness of his heart not to return in repentance, only destroys himself alone; and the wisdom of the righteous poor is despised in the ages of the wicked of his generation; and when he reproves them for their evil works, they do not receive his words of reproof. The words of prayer of the wise, offered in silence, are accepted before the Lord of the world, above the exclamations of the wicked who rules over fools, that speak much, and are not accepted. Better is the wisdom of the wise in time of oppression, than instruments of war in the time of waging war, and one sinner in a generation causes much good to perish from the world.

x. 1 And the evil spirit which dwells at the gate of the heart is as a fly, causing death in the world by betraying the wise when he sins, and destroying the good name which was before like anointing oil, perfumed with aromatics; and how much more beautiful and precious than the wisdom of the wise and the riches of the rich is the man whose folly is slight and insignificant? The heart of the wise is to acquire the Law which was given by the hand of the Lord, and the heart of the fool is to acquire riches of silver and gold. And also when the fool walks in an offensive way, his heart lacks wisdom, and he does things which are not right to do, and all say that he is a fool. If the evil spirit rules over thee, and strives to overcome thee, leave not the good place wherein thou usest to stand, for the words of the law were made to be remedies in the world, to remit and blot out great sins from before the Lord. 5 There is an evil which I saw in this world under the sun, and what injury is it in the world! just as an error hastily uttered against a man, and that by a ruler! The Lord from the high heavens makes the wicked and foolish king to be strong in his good star, and to minister prosperously, and his armies to be excellent and numerous; whilst thy people, the house of Israel, are subject to him in exile; and because of the multitude of their sins the rich in goods became poor, and dwelt in humiliation among the nations. King Solomon said by the spirit of prophecy, I saw nations who were before subject to the people of the house of Israel, now prosperous, and riding on horses like princes, whilst the people of the house of Israel and their nobles walk on the ground like slaves. Justice answered and said thus: They brought all this upon themselves; as a man who digs a pit upon the high road falls into it, so the people which transgresses the decrees of the word of the Lord, and destroys the fences of the world, falls into the hand of a wicked king, who bites them like a serpent. King Solomon the prophet said, It is revealed to me that Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, will sin and worship idols of stone, wherefore he will be delivered into the hand of the King of Assyria, and he will fasten him with halters; because he made void the words of the law which are written on the tables of stone from the beginning, therefore he will suffer for it; and Rabshakeh, his brother, will worship an image of wood and forsake the words of the Law which are laid in the ark of shittim wood: therefore he shall be burned in a fire by the angel of the Lord. And when the people of the house of Israel sin, and the heavens are made strong as iron to keep back the rain, and that generation does not pray before the Lord, all the world is afflicted with famine on their account; and when the multitude

gather themselves together and overcome their evil spirit, and appoint their superiors to ask mercy from the Lord of heaven, there is acceptance for them, because of the abundance of their true wisdom. When the fiery serpents are roused to devour and to injure the world, it is because of the sins of the house of Israel, for not having been occupied with the words of the Law in quietness; and there will also be no advantage to the slanderer who talks with a threefold tongue, because he will be burned in the fire of Gehenna. The words of the mouth of a wise man that is found in a generation pray when punishment comes upon the world, and he removes the punishment and finds mercy before the Lord; but the lips of the fool are full of reproach, and therefore all the world is destroyed. The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly, and the end of the word of his mouth is evil agitation. And the fool multiplies empty words wherein there is no use, so much so that no man knows what will be in his days; and what will become of him at the end, who can tell him? The labour of a fool who labours in folly wearies him, because he will not learn to go to the city where the wise dwell to seek instruction. Woe to thee, O land of Israel! when wicked Jeroboam shall reign over thee, and remove from thee the morning sacrifices, and thy princes shall eat bread before offering the daily morning sacrifice. 17 Hail thee, O land of Israel, when Hezekiah son of Ahaz, from the family of the house of David, King of Israel, who is mighty in the law, shall reign over thee, and shall perform the obligations of the commandments; and thy nobles, after having brought thee daily sacrifice, shall eat bread at four [i.e., ten o'clock in the morning,] from the work of their hands in the strength of the Law, and not in weakness and blindness of eyes. By the weakness of the study of the Law and the commandments, man becomes poor in children, and by despising the commandment which commands the woman to observe the time of uncleanness of blood and she did not observe it, she is always in a menstrual state in her house. The righteous joyfully make bread to nourish the hungry poor; and the wine which they mix for the thirsty will be pleasure to them in the world to come; and the redemption money will proclaim their merit in the world to come in the face of all. Even in thy mind, in the innermost recesses of thy heart, curse not the king, and in thy bed-chamber revile not a wise man, for the angel Raziel proclaims every day from heaven upon Mount Horeb, and the sound thereof goes into all the world, and Elijah the high priest continually hovers in the air like an angel, the king of the winged tribe, and discloses the things that are done in secret to all the inhabitants of the earth. xi. 1 Give thy nourishing bread to the poor who go in ships upon the surface of the water, for after a period of many days thou wilt find its reward in the world to come. Give a good portion of the seed to thy field in Tishri, and do not cease from sowing even in Kislev, for thou knowest not what evil will be upon the earth, whether the early or latter will succeed. If the clouds are full of rain, they will pour the water upon the earth, because of the merit of the righteous; and if there is no merit in that generation, they will pour it into the sea and desert, so that the children of men should not enjoy it; and if it is once decreed from heaven that the king should fall and be removed from his dominion, it is by the word of heaven; or that plenty or famine is to be in the south or north, in the place where this counsel has been decreed there it will certainly be. A man who regards sorcerers and charmers will never do good, and he who watches the planets will not reap a reward, for sorcerers are like the wind, not to

he seized by human hands; and planets are like the clouds of heaven, which pass away and do not return. As thou knowest not how the spirit of the breath of life goes into the body of an infant which rests in the womb of its pregnant mother, and as thou knowest not whether it is a male or female until it is born, so thou understandest not the work of the Lord, who made all in wisdom. In the days of thy youth take a wife to beget children, and in the time of thy old age do not leave the wife of thy portion so as not to bear children, for thou knowest not which of them is destined to be good, one or the other, or whether both will be alike good. And sweet is the light of the Law, and fitted to enlighten the dark eyes to behold the glorious face of the Shechinah, which will brighten from her splendour the face of the righteous, that their beauty may be like the sun. For if the life of man is many days, it becomes him to rejoice in all of them, and to study the Law of the Lord; let him remember the days of the darkness of death, and not sin, for many are the days wherein he shall lie dead in the grave to receive the judgment from heaven for the life he loved, all the time punishment comes upon him for the vanity he has done. Rejoice, O young man, in the days of thy youth, and let thy heart be cheerful in the days of thy childhood, and walk in meekness with the ways of thy heart, and be careful as to the seeing of thy eyes, and do not look upon evil, and know that for all this the Lord will bring thee into judgment. And put away anger from thy heart, and bring no evil upon thy flesh, for youth and the days of black hair are vanity.

xii. 1 And remember thy Creator to honour him in the days of thy youth, before the evil days draw nigh to thee, and the years come upon thee when thou wilt say, I have no pleasure in them. Before the glorious brightness which is like the sun be changed, and before the light of thy eyes be darkened, and before the comeliness of thy cheeks becomes black, and before the apples of thy eyes, which are like stars, be dim, thy eyelids drop down tears like clouds after rain. In the day when thy knees tremble, and thy arms shake, and the grinders of thy mouth cease till they cannot chew food, and thy eyes which look through the openings of thy head darken, and thy feet be fettered from going into the street, and the appetite for food shall depart from thee, and thou shalt awake from thy sleep at the sound of a bird, as at thieves that go about during the night, and thy lips shall relax from saying a song. Thou shalt even be afraid to remember the works which have been before now, and a little rising will be in the face of thy soul, like a great mountain when thou walkest on the road; and the top of thy hipbone shall come out from leanness like the almond, and the ancles of thy feet shall be swelled, and thou shalt be hindered from rest, for man hurries to go to the place of his burial; and the angels that seek thy judgment walk about like mourners, walking about the street, to write the account of the judgment. Before thy tongue is dumb from speaking, and the skull of thy head dashed in pieces, and thy gall at the liver broken, and thy body hastens into the grave, and thy flesh which is created of dust will return again into the earth as it was before, and thy breathing spirit will return to stand in judgment before the Lord who gave it thee. When Solomon, king of Israel, reflected upon the vanity of this world, and upon the vanities which the children of men do, Coheleth said by his word, All is vanity. And Solomon, who was called Coheleth, was abundantly wise above all the children of men, and further, he taught the people of the house of Israel wisdom; and he attended to the voice of the wise, and searched the books of wisdom, and

by the spirit of prophecy from the Lord composed many wise books, and very many prudential maxims. King Solomon, who was called Coheleth, desired by his wisdom to pronounce judgment upon the thoughts of the heart of man without witnesses, therefore he was told by the spirit of prophecy from the Lord, Behold, it has long been written in the Book of the Law through Moses, rabbi of Israel, right and faithful words, that by the word of witnesses shall every thing be established. The words of the wise are like inciting goads and forks, which incite those who are destitute of knowledge to learn wisdom, as the goad teaches the ox; and so are the words of the rabbins of the Sanhedrin, the masters of the Halachas and Midrashim which were given through Moses the prophet, who alone fed the people of the house of Israel in the wilderness with manna and delicacies. And more than these, my son, take care, to make many books of wisdom without an end; to study much the words of the Law, and to consider the weariness of the flesh. In the end, a thing which was done in this world in secret will altogether be made manifest, and known to all the children of men; therefore fear the word of the Lord, and keep his commandments, that thou sin not in secret; and if thou sinnest, be admonished to repent; for behold, this ought to be the way of every man. For the Lord will bring every work before the great day of judgment, and make public the thing which is hid from the children of men, whether good or evil.

II.

VERSIONS OF THE REFORMERS.

A. LUTHER'S VERSION.

As soon as the Reformation began in Germany, Luther felt that its extension and maintenance could only be accomplished by enabling the people at large to possess and read the Bible in their vernacular language, which he at once determined to do. Considering that up to that time the knowledge of Hebrew was hardly ever cultivated to any great extent among Christians, and that they had no scientific grammars and lexicons, except those written in Hebrew, to assist them in the acquisition of this language, it will be obvious that Luther could not have made his translation of the Old Testament without the aid of the Vulgate, which he had diligently studied prior to the commencement of the Reformation. How much Luther's Version is indebted to the Vulgate, may be seen from the following comparison:—

THE VULGATE.

Quid est quod fuit? Ipsum quod futurum est? Quid est quod factum est? Ipsum quod faciendum est.

Investigare sapienter.
Magnus effectus sum . . . et mens mea contemplata est multa sapienter et didici.
Et qui addit scientiam, addit et laborem.

LUTHER.

i. 9 Was ist es, das geschehen ist?
Eben das hernach geschehen wird.
Was ist es, das man gethan hat?
Eben das man hernach wieder thun wird.

13 Zu forschen weislich.
16 Ich bin herrlich geworden . . .
und mein Herz hat viel gelernt und erfahren.

18 Und wer viel lehren muß, der muß viel leiden.

THE VULGATE.

Cogitavi in corde meo abstrahere a vino carnem meam, ut nimium meum transferrem ad sapientiam devitaremque stultitiam.

Possedi servos et ancillas, mulamque familiam habui.

Omits *נישן*.

Et futura tempora oblivione uncta pariter operient.

Cum requies . . . cum labore et afflictione animi.

Et appropinqua ut audias.

Mutas curas sequuntur somnia, et in multis sermonibus inveniuntur stultitia.

Ubi multa sunt somnia, plurimae sunt vanitates et sermones innumeri.

Fructum non capiet ex eis. Pereunt enim in afflictione pessima; generavit filium, qui in summa egestate erit.

Et in curis multis, et in ærumna atque tristitia.

Non enim satis recordabitur dierum vitæ suæ, eo quod Deus occupet deliciis cor ejus.

Et quidem frequens apud homines.

De hoc ego pronuncio, quod.

Sicut enim protegit sapientia, sic protegit pecunia; hoc autem plus habet eruditio et sapientia, quod vitam tribuunt possessori suo.

Ego os regis observo, et præcepta juramenti Dei.

Renders the future *מה שיהיה* præterita.

Et quanto plus laboraverit ad quærendum, tantominus inveniat. Multo labore exacuatur.

Si mordeat serpens in silentio, nihil eo minus habet qui occulte detrahit.

Renders the future *מה שיהיה* quid ante se fuerit.

Et in bono sit cor tuum.

LUTHER.

ii. 3 Da dachte ich in meinem Herzen, meinen Leib vom Wein zu ziehen, und mein Herz zur Weisheit zu ziehen, daß ich ergriffe, was Thorheit ist.

7 Ich hatte Knechte und Mägde, und Gesinde.

11 The same.

10 Und die künftigen Tage vergessen alle.

iv. 6 Mit Ruhe . . . mit Mühe und Jammer.

Und komme daß du hörest.

17 Denn wo viel Sorge ist, da kommen Träume; und wo viele Worte sind, da hört man den Narren.

v. 2 Wo viele Träume sind, da ist Eitelkeit und viele Worte.

9 Wird keinen Nutzen davon haben.

13 Denn der Reichthum kommt um mit großem Jammer; und so er einen Sohn erzeuge hat, dem bleibt nichts in der Hand.

16 Und in großem Grämen und Krankheit und Traurigkeit.

19 Denn er denkt nicht viel an das elende Leben, weil Gott sein Herz erfreuet.

vi. 1 Und ist gemein bei den Menschen.

3 Von dem spreche ich, daß.

vii. 12 Denn die Weisheit beschirmet, so beschirmet Geld auch, aber die Weisheit gibt das Leben dem, der sie hat.

viii. 2 Ich hatte das Wort des Königs, und den Eid Gottes.

7 The same, was gewesen ist.

17 Und je mehr der Mensch arbeitet zu suchen, je weniger er findet.

x. 10 Muß man es mit Macht wieder schärfen.

11 Ein Wäscher ist nichts besser denn eine Schlange, die unbeschworen sticht.

14 The same, was gewesen ist.

xi. 9 Und laß dein Herz guter Dinge sein.

In all the examples where Luther agrees with the Vulgate, be it remembered, the Vulgate deviates from the Hebrew. The following, i. 11; iii. 9. 10. 11. 16. 18. 19; iv. 1. 9. 16; v. 5. 8. 14. 18; vi. 5. 6. 7. 8. 10. 11. 12; vii. 7. 12. 14. 24. 25. 26; ix. 11. 15. 17; x. 1. 3, 9; xi. 1; xii. 3, are instances of Luther's own loose paraphrases and deviations from the original. We dwell upon this subject more particularly, because Luther's version, as we shall see, has been made the basis of some of our English translations; and it is only by forming a right estimate of the former that we can judge of the latter.

B. THE SWISS, OR ZURICH VERSION.

Stimulated by the example of Luther, the ministers of the Church at Zurich undertook to render the Scriptures into the Swiss dialect. After elaborately descanting upon the propriety of translating the Bible into the vernacular languages of the people, the translators tell us in the Preface that they have adopted Luther's version of the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Kings, and Chronicles, which had been printed previously in this dialect, altering it, however, so as to make it both more in accordance with their dialect and more literal; and that they had made an original translation from the Hebrew of the Prophets, Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. How they could obtain from the Hebrew that which they frequently make Cobelet say, will, I believe, puzzle the reader quite as much as it puzzles me, when he shall have perused the extracts given under Coverdale. The first edition of the Bible was published at Zurich in 1531, by the famous Christopher Froschover, who received many of the English Reformers who were exiled in the reign of Queen Mary.¹ Mine is the second edition, published in 1536; it is a splendid folio, printed upon excellent paper; the title-page is richly decorated with woodcuts representing the creation of man, his temptation, fall, redemption, &c., printed with red and black ink; woodcuts as well as ornamental letters are profusely introduced throughout the book, and the illustrations in the Apocalypse are after Holbein; the execution of the whole would be an honour to any printing establishment in England. It is greatly to be regretted that this important edition is so extremely rare.

C. COVERDALE'S VERSION.

The first published English version of Cobelet, made, as is generally asserted, from the Hebrew, is that of Myles Coverdale, who published the first English translation of the entire Bible. Coverdale himself, so far from claiming to have made it from the original, distinctly tells us in the very title-page that he has "faithfully and truly translated out of Douche and Latyn in to Englishe," and again honourably acknowledges, in the Prologue to the Christian Reader, "I haue had sundrye translacons, not only in Latyn, but also of the Douche interpreters, whom, because of theyr syngular gyftes and speciall diligence in the Bible, I haue bene the more glad to follow for the most parte, accordynge as I was requyred." How closely Coverdale has followed these Douche = Deutsche, i.e., German or German-Swiss interpreters, of "singular gifts and special diligence in the Bible," may be seen from the following parallel column, where he has not

¹ Comp. Strype, Memor. iii. i. 232; The Zurich Letters, 1558-1579, the Parker Society's ed. p. 11.

only literally translated the Swiss Version, but even inserted its *parenthetical marks* : —

THE ZURICH or SWISS BIBLE.

Es ist nûts dan eytelkeit (spricht der Prebiger) ja eytelkeit alles. Dan wî bleybt dem menschen über von aller seiner arbeyt. Der wind durchwäget mittag . . . lumpt er wider in sich selbst.

Dann da die flûß hinauffend, dannen hâr kommend sy auch wider.

Die ding die gewesen sind, die werdend wider; vnd die ding die geschêhen sind geschêhend wider.

Ich der Prebiger ein Künig Israels vnnb Jerusalem, hab fleÿß angewendt wie ich erkläre vnd durchgründte das wîssen aller dingen die vnder dem himmel geworden sind.

Sôliche mûÿ vnd arbeit hat Gott den menschen geben, das sy darinn geestiget wurden.

Dann wo vil weÿÿheit ist, da ist auch vil angst vnnb sorg.

Also, das ich zum gelächter sprach.

Ich bauwet herrliche schöne werke. Vdum allerley frûchten.

It will be seen that in the last two instances Coverdale has even followed the Swiss construction, at the expense of the English idiom, making "manner" an adjective, to imitate *allerley frûchten by all manner frutes*. We cannot institute this comparison any further, as we should have to give by far the greater portion of the book, the instances in which Coverdale follows the Vulgate and Luther being comparatively few. The above examples are most decisive, inasmuch as they shew that Coverdale agrees with the Swiss Bible where the Swiss Bible deviates from the Hebrew. If, however, any one should still be so credulous as to believe that Coverdale, in translating from the Hebrew, hit exactly upon the same loose paraphrases and errors as the Swiss Bible, his credulity will vanish when he reads through the headings of the chapters, which we subjoin entire —

THE ZURICH or SWISS BIBLE.

Alle ding wie sy ermiÿt vnd betrachtet, sind sy eytel, vnder allen dingen nichts aber schwerers vnnb vnstätters dann der mensch.

COVERDALE'S BIBLE.

- i. 2 All is but vanitie (saith the Preacher), all is but playne vanitie.
- 3 For what els hath a mā, of all the labour.
- 6 The wynde goeth towards the south . . . turneth in to himself agayne.
- 7 For loke vnto what place the waters runne, thence they come agayne.
- 9 The thinge that hath bene done, cometh to passe agayne; and the thinge that hath bene done, is done agayne.
- 12 I myself the Preacher, beyng Kynge of Israel and Jerusale, applyed my mynde to seke out and search for the knowledge of all thinges that are done vnder heauē.
- 13 Soch trouayle and labour bath God geuē vnto the childrē of mē, to exerceyse thē selues theri.
- 18 For where moch wyszdome is there is also greate trouayle and disquietnes.
- ii. 2 In so moch that I sayde vnto laughter.
- 4 I made gorgious fayre workes.
- 6 Trees of all manner frutes.

COVERDALE'S VERSION.

- i. All thinges (yf a mā wyl cōsidre them wel) are but vanite. Neuertheles amōge them all there is nothige weaker and more vnstedfast, then man him self.

THE ZURICH or SWISS BIBLE.

Er bildet in diesem capitel vnd anderen oft an die red vnd sitten die die gottlosen treÿbend, damit er bester kômlicher zu verschmächet aller creature, den mensche allein vff Gott fûre.

Feert das alle ding jr gelagne zeÿt habend; kummer vnnb mûÿ der in allenn dingen ist, gibt Gott dem menschen zur übung. Was der mensch von seiner arbeit neÿÿt, ist ein gaab Gottes, dienet darzu das wir in vor augen habind.

Mangerley dingenn trachtung. Item das nichts so hoch sey, verachtet es sein pflicht vnnb ampt, so wirdt es auch verachtet.

Wider die toechten vñ frassen glâbb. Man sol sich nit verwunden das vil vnbillis geschicht, dann der schâlden sind vil. Wider die reÿchen vnd reÿchtigen.

Wider die reÿchen die jr reÿchtigen nit niessen gehôrend, wie toecht sy spgind.

Niman weÿÿ was güt vnnb künstig sey, wie kostlich ein gûter nam sey. Von nutzbarkeit der weÿÿheit.

Von gehorsame die man Gott vnd seinen oberen pflichtig ist. Von eyds pflicht: wie man die vultmüt Gottes nit verachten sol: das es vnmüglich sey dem menschen die werd die in der welt sind zu erduren.

Das es allen menschen gleych gange, deÿÿhalb der mensch mit frôuden vñ bandbarkeit niessen sol die gaaben Gottes: weÿÿheit übertrifft alle ding.

Hierin sind vil weÿÿer sprûchen vnd nutzbarer leeren, deÿ gleychen im eyÿÿÿten.

In diesem capitel zeiget der Prebiger sein meinung gruntlich an, als wölle er sprechen, wie ich auch von allen dinge die vnder der

COVERDALE'S VERSION.

- ii. In this chapter (and in the other also) he maketh oft tymes mēcion of the wordes and cōuersaciō of the vngodly; that by this meanes he maye the better cause men to despyse all creatures, in respectes of the only euerlastinge God.

- iii. Euery thinge hath a tyme. There is no thige, but God hath put tedyousnesse and trauayle in it, to exercise men withall. What so euer a man enioyeth of his labour, the same is a gift of God, geuen to the intent that men shulde feare him.

- iv. A cōsideracion of diuerse thinges. There is nothinge so excellent and hye, but yf it do not the deuty and office where vnto it is ordered, it shalbe brought lowe.

- v. Agaynst foolish and temerarious vowes. Let no man maruayle that so moch euell is done, for the wicked are many. Agaynst the riche and agaynst riches.

- vi. Agaynst those riche mē that darre not enioye their riches: how mad and foolish they be.

- vii. No man knoweth what is for to come. How worthy a thige it is to haue a good name. The profit of wyszdome.

- viii. Of the obediēce which men owe vnto God and to their heades. The lōge sufferance of God is not to be despised. It is not possible for eny mā to cōprehende the workes that be in the worlde.

- ix. Like thinges happen vnto all men: therefore with myrth and thankfulness shulde men enioye the gites of God. Wyszdome passeth all thinges

- x., xi. In these two chapters are many wyse and profitable sentences, wel worthy to be considered of euery man.

- xii. In this chapter the preacher sheweth his whole meanyng, as though he wolde saye: As for all the thinges that be vnder the

THE ZURICH OR SWISS BIBLE.

COVERDALE'S VERSION.

Sonnen find erfaren, betrachtet, vnd gerebt hab, so ist doch das der beßluß, Das nichts steiff vñ best ist dan Gott, vnd sein gericht von jugent auf vnd allweg vor augen haben.

xii. Sonne (wher of I haue spoken), I haue cōsidered them, and proued them metely wel by experience. And this is the conclusion, that there is nothyng stedfast and durable but God himself, who men ought to feare, and to haue his cōmandements before their eyes euen from their youth vp.

With these facts before us, we are amazed at the ignorance prevalent upon the sources of our first published English Bible, which has been made the basis of succeeding versions, and that the editor of the reprint of Coverdale's Bible should characterise it as "a faithful version of the original Scriptures,"¹ and assert that the mention of its being translated "out of the Douche and Latyn," which Coverdale was in conscience bound to make, "was no doubt a bookselling artifice of the time, to make the work circulate better, as being intimately connected with the Reformed doctrines, which were then equally well known by the term German or Dutch doctrines . . . that Coverdale did not follow Luther's version, it only requires a very slight comparison of the text to prove; but he no doubt availed himself, *where there occurred any difficult reading*, of all the different means of assistance within his power."² More unpardonable is Anderson's ignorance upon this version. He who would taunt Bishop Marsh with having committed blunders respecting the sources of Tyndal's translation, and with very bad taste triumphantly assert, "it is singular enough that no English prelate should have ever made himself acquainted with the history, character, and acquirements of William Tyndale,"³ ought, in writing such bulky volumes upon the Annals of the English Bible, to have been better acquainted with the origin and merits of Coverdale's version than to assert, with reference to "Coverdale's qualifications as a translator from the original, there can be little or rather no question, after what Mr. Whittaker has so ably written respecting his acquaintance with Hebrew,—though, at the same time, his *leaning* to the Vulgate and German versions has been made equally apparent by Professor Walter;"—or to assure us, in a foot-note, that "the interpreters themselves cannot now be positively fixed," and then confidently to tell us that Coverdale "certainly does not appear to have venerated 'these interpreters' as *authority*; he regarded their translations with 'gladness,' and therefore could not, upon all occasions, be free from some degree of bias."⁴ Had Anderson compared a single chapter in Coverdale's Bible with the Swiss Version, he would not have committed such egregious blunders. It is to be regretted that Mr. Pearson, the editor of "Remains of Myles Coverdale," should have so positively declared, in his biographical notice, that Coverdale's Version "throughout bears marks of a close attention to the Original,"⁵ and that Mr. Bastow should

¹ The Holy Scriptures Faithfully and Truly Translated, by Myles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter, 1535; reprinted by Samuel Bagster, 1838; Preface, p. iv.
² *Ibid.*, Bibliographical Description.
³ The Annals of the English Bible, by Christopher Anderson, London, 1845, vol. i. p. 285.
⁴ The Annals of the English Bible, vol. i. p. 504.
⁵ Remains of Myles Coverdale, edited for the Parker Society, by the Rev. George Pearson, B. D., Rector of Castle Camps, p. xvi.

have implicitly copied these blunders in his very excellent and useful Bible Dictionary.¹

As the Appendices are already larger than I anticipated, I must reserve the examination of the remaining English translations, including the Authorised Version, for the next volume, when it will be shewn that they are all more or less based upon the versions of antiquity.

III.

ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA.

PAGE 58.

We have said, in the Introduction (p. 58), that Mr. Preston's mis-translation of Maimonides' vindication of Coheleth (i. 4), against the imputation that it propounds the eternity of the world, obliged us to make a new translation, which we subjoin, together with Mr. Preston's version, and the original.

הרבה מאנשי תורתנו חשבו כי שלמה ע"ה יאמין הקדמות וזה שלא אין ידמו באדם שהוא מאנשי תורת מרע"ה שיאמין בקדמות ואם יחשוב אדם שזה נשיה מכנו מדיעות התורה ויצאיה מעקר הדת ודלילה לאלהים אין קבלתו ממנו רב הנביאים והחכמים ולא חלקו עליו בו ולא נגדו לאחר מותו כמו שנמצא שחיבתו בנשים נכריות וזולתם ואמנם הביא להשוב זה עליו מאמר החכמי בקשו לגנוז ספר קולת מפני שדבריו נוטים לדברי מינות וכן הוא הענין בלא ספק ר"ל שבפשוטו של ספר ההוא עניניו נוטים לצד דעות נרות מדיעות התורה יצטרכו לפירוש ואין הקדמות מכללם ואין לו פסוק יורה על הקדמות ולא ימצא לו בשום פנים פסוק מבוואר בקדמות העולם אמנם יש לו פסוקים מורים על נצחיותו והוא אמת וכאשר ראו כתובים מורים על נצחיותו חשבו שהוא מאמין שהוא בלתי מחושב ואין הענין כן אמנם לשוני הנצחות הוא אמר והארץ לעולם עומדת עד שהוצרך מי שלא שער בזה החדוש שיאמר הוכח המשוער לה יכן יאמרו באכזר יתעלה עוד כל ימי הארץ שהוא כל ימי הנגזרים לה ואני חכיה מה יאמרו במאמר דר' יסד ארץ על מכוניה בל תמוס עולם ועד ואם ידעו ג"כ אמרו עולם ועד לא יחייב הנצחות הנה האל יתעלה א"כ יש לו מדת וכן אמת כי הכתוב אמר בנצחותי יתעלה ה' מלך עולם ועד ואשר תדעו שהעולם לא יחייב הנצחות אלא כשיחזר עד אם אחרין באמרו עולם ועד אפניו באמרו עד עולם א"כ מאמר שלמה לעולם עומדת וכל מה שבהם על ענין לא ישתנה לעולם וכבר באר דוד עליו השלום וגלה נצחות השמי' והחמדת חקיהם וכל מה שבהם על ענין לא ישתנה לעולם ואמרו ה'אלו את יי' מן השמים וכו' כי הוא צדק ונבירא ויעמידם לעד לעולם חזק נתן ולא יעבור רצוני לומר שאלו החקים אשר חקקם לא ישתנו לנצח כי זה ההקדק רמז לחקת שמים וארץ הקדום וזכרם אלא שהוא כיאר שהם נבראים ואמר כי הוא צדק ונבירא ואמר ירמיה ע"ה נוחן שמש לאור יומם הקד ירח וכו' כיאר שהם נבראים רצוני לומר אלו החקים הם לא ישתנו ומה שבו עומדים על שבנם לנצח ואע"פ שהם ע"ה וכבר זכר ג"כ שלמה שאלו מעשי האל ר"ל העולם ומה שבו עומדים על שבנם לנצח ואע"פ שהם עשויים אמר כי כל אשר יעשה האלהים הוא יהיה לעולם עליו אין להוסף וממנו אין לגרוע הנה כבר הגיד בזה הפסוק שהעולם ממעשה האל ושהוא נצחי ונתן העלה גם כן בנצחותו והוא אמרו עליו אין להוסף וממנו אין לגרוע שהוא עלה להיותו לעולם כאלו אמר כי הרבר אשר ישתנה אמנם ישתנה מפני חסרון כים שיש בו ויושע או חוססת בו אין צורך אליה ותחסר החוססת ההיא אמנם פעולת הש' אדור שהם בתכלית השלמות וא"א החוססת בהם ולא החסרון מהם אם כן הם יעמדו נמי מה שהם עליו בהכרח שא"א הכיצד דבר מביא לשנויים

¹ A Bible Dictionary, by the Rev. James Austin Bastow, London, 1850; Introduction, p. 37.

MR. PRESTON'S TRANSLATION.

NEW TRANSLATION.

MANY men who hold our law think that Solomon believed in the existence of our world from all eternity. But it is wonderful that any one holding the law of Moses should believe in this doctrine. And if it had come into the mind of one who did not believe the statements of our law, it would not be wonderful; but God has shown that this cannot have been the case with Solomon, because all the prophets and wise men received his writings as canonical, and never called them in question, nor even after his death spoke at all disparagingly of him on this ground, as we find that they did with respect to certain "strange women," and several other matters; but what has led men to think so is the fact, that "our wise men sought to hide the book of Ecclesiastes, because of the apparent inconsistencies of many of its expressions;" and there can be no doubt that that book, taken in its obvious sense, contains expressions apparently repugnant to belief in the law. But as to the existence of the world from eternity, there is no passage to indicate that such was his belief, though there is one, it is true, which shows that *he believed that* the world will not perish, but last for ever. Because, then, they saw that there was a verse proving the stability of the world, they thought erroneously that he believed that the world was not created. Now the verse which speaks of the future eternal duration of the world is this: "The earth abides for ever." Some have interpreted the expression עולם as signifying only for a "definite" time. But I should like to know what they will make of the passage which we find in David, (Psalm x. 4, 5.) "He has founded the earth on its basis, that it should not be removed for ever and ever," עולם ועד. But if you should say that the expression עולם ועד does not demonstrate its eternal duration, but only its duration for a definite time, you will necessarily say at the same time,

MANY who adhere to our law thought that Solomon, peace be upon him, believed in the eternity of the world; but this is very strange. How could they suppose that one who adheres to the law of Moses, peace be upon him, can at the same time believe in the eternity of the world? But if one should think that in this Solomon deviated from the teachings of the law, and departed from the articles of our religion, and God forbid this, how could the great prophets and sages receive this from him without contradicting or blaming him after his death, just as we find that they have condemned him for his strange women, and for some other things? This suspicion, however, arose from the fact that our sages wanted to make Coheleth apocryphal, because its sentiments incline to heresy. And indeed it is true that the obvious sense of the book inclines to doctrines foreign to our law, and requires explanation, but the eternity of the world is not amongst them; and there is not a single passage either propounding the eternity of the world, or even touching this subject, though there are passages in it setting forth its perpetuity, which forsooth is true. And when they saw that there were verses which show its perpetuity, they concluded that he also believed in its non-creation, which is not true. The passage which speaks of perpetuity is "the earth abideth for ever," (Coheleth i. 4.) and there are some even who, not being able to find in it the subject in question, take these words to denote a limited period, just as, they say, the words of the Most High, "while the earth remaineth." (Genesis vii. 18.) But I wonder what these persons will say to the declaration of David, "He has fixed the earth upon her foundations, she shall not be moved, (עולם ועד) for ever and ever." (Psalm civ. 5.) If the phrase עולם ועד does not denote perpetuity, then must the existence of the most high God himself have

MR. PRESTON'S TRANSLATION.

NEW TRANSLATION.

that the Creator will only reign for a definite time, as we find in Psalm x. 16: "The Lord is King עולם ועד for ever and ever." Now it is generally allowed that עולם does not denote eternity of duration except when joined with עד. Solomon, therefore, speaks less strongly than David; but David furthermore, in the 148th Psalm, assures us that the heavens and all things they contain will last for ever, and will suffer no change; where he says, "Praise the Lord in the heavens, &c." to where he says, "he hath established them for ever and ever," ויִצְמְדוּ לְעַד לְעוֹלָם and he adds, יִצְבֹּר, דַּק נֶחֱן וְלֹא יִצְבֹּר, i. e., "because the precepts which he has given will not be changed;" where by "precepts" he intends "the laws of nature," i. e., "the laws of the constitution of heaven and earth ordained before they were created." But that they were created, is clear from what he says, "he commanded, and they were created." Jeremiah also says, "Thus saith the Lord, who maketh the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night; if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever." Here he informs us that those laws are never to be abrogated, though they were at first put into operation by supreme power. Solomon says, too, that "All things which God has made," (viz., the world and all things in it) "are stable in their nature, although all are created things;" for he has these words, "all things which God has made shall be for ever; no one can diminish from them or add to them;"

a definite period, since we find that the Scripture describes the perpetuity of the Most High by, "the Lord is King (עולם ועד) for ever and ever." (Ps. x. 16.) And what thou shouldst know is that the word עולם does not denote *perpetuity*, except when עד is added to it, either after it as in the passage עולם ועד or before it, as in the phrase עד עולם. This being the case, the phrase of Solomon, לְעוֹלָם וְעַד, *abideth for ever*, (Coheleth i. 3.) is not even so strong as that of David, בְּלֹא תִסָּוֶה עוֹלָם (Psalm civ. 5.) *shall not be moved for ever and ever*. Now David, peace be upon him, has already declared that the heavens and their ordinances will last for ever, and undergo no change, when he says, "Praise the Lord from the heavens, . . . for he commanded and they were created, he hath also established them for ever and ever, he hath made a decree which shall not pass;" (Psalm cxlviii. 1-6.) i. e., the ordinances which he has established will never be changed, for the word עַד here denotes the ordinances of heaven and earth described in the preceding part of the psalm, although he declares that they were created, when he says "he commanded and they were created." (Ib. v. 5.) So also Jeremiah, in the passage, "thus saith the Lord which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, . . . if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before me for ever," (xxxii. 35, 36.) has already declared that the ordinances, though created, will never be abrogated. And if thou wilt examine it, thou wilt find the same in other passages of Solomon, peace be upon him; inasmuch as Solomon also affirms that these works of God, i. e., the world and all things therein, are perpetual in their nature, though they were created, since he says, "all things which God hath made shall exist for ever, nothing can be added

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and he thus at the same time states that the world and all that is in it is the work of God, and assigns the reason of their eternal duration in the words, "There is no adding to them or diminishing from them;" as if he had said, "everything which suffers change, suffers it either in consequence of some defect in it, where there is a want of perfection, or of some superabundance of something not necessary to its perfection; but since the works of the Creator are absolutely perfect, and no addition or diminution can be made in them, they will necessarily remain as they are, because there is nothing to induce change in them."

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to them, nor can anything be taken away from them;" (Cohemoth iii. 14.) thus declaring here that the world is created by God, and yet is perpetual. He moreover gives the cause of its perpetual duration, when he says, "nothing can be added to it or taken away from it," (*Ibid.*) and herein lies the cause of its perpetual existence; as if he had said, Every thing which suffers change, suffers it either because it has some defect, and hence must be perfected, or because it has something redundant and useless, and this must be removed! But since the works of the blessed God are absolutely perfect, as it is impossible that they should have anything redundant, or be defective, therefore they must necessarily remain as they are, because it is impossible that any thing could be found to induce a change.

PAGE 11.

בן זונין is to be rendered the *son of Zonin*, or *ben Zonin*.

PAGE 66.

The point in which they are all alike is that they were all obliged to alter the literal sense of the book into palatable sentiments, and none of them gave a plausible reason how he could draw wholesome food, or elicit sweetness from this rock, is a more correct rendering of Aramah's words, הַצֵּד הַשֵּׁהָ שֶׁנָּהָם שָׁכְלָם נִדְחָקִים לְשִׁנוֹת אֶחָד שֶׁעָמַד בְּדַבָּר 'מִחוּקִים לֹא אֶחָד בָּהֶם נָתַן בּוֹ שֶׁעַם לְשִׁבָּח בְּשִׁעְיָם מִסִּפְּקִים מִן הַסֵּלַע נֹצֵא מֵאֵל בְּרִיאָה וּמֵעַז יֵצֵא מִמִּחְקִים.

PAGE 293, CHAP. ii. 16.

It is not Ibn Ezra himself, but one quoted by him, who takes בשִׁבְר in the sense of *as in time past*. The passage quoted (p. 293) is to be translated *one of the interpreters said that בשִׁבְר denotes TIME PAST, but when he saw that the words הָיִים הָאֵלֶּם stood in his way, he said it ought to be בשִׁבְר*.

